Football Premiership: Arsenal 0 Wimbledon 1

Jones keeps the Dons on target

David Lacey

WIMBLEDON's season continues to carry the promise of a silver lining, but after two home defeats in five days Arsenal's outlook has become as leaden as the skies under which they lost to a goal from Vinnie Jones at Highbury last Sunday.

After the game Arsène Wenger, Arsenal's French manager, conceded that this latest setback had finished their championship hopes. "Yes, for the title of course," he replied when asked if the result had ended the team's interest in the Premiership, "but for Europe, no."

Wenger also complained about fixture scheduling which had brought forward last week's match against Manchester United from March 4, when United will be preparing for their European Cup quarter-final against Porto. Wimbledon, he observed, had met Leicester City in the League Cup semi-finals a day earlier.

Wenger's comments rather surprised Joe Kinnear, the Wimbledon manager, who pointed out that recently his team had played United three times in 11 days in league and FA Cup. In fact, Wimbledon have played roughly once every four days since the turn of the year.

Then again Kinnear was speaking from a position of strength: his side have now been beaten only three times in 33 matches, they are in the League Cup semi-finals, the FA Cup quarter-finals, and are now sixth in the Premiership with three games in hand on most of those above them.

Last Sunday's match reflected the teams' contrasting moods. Arsenal, having lost their unbeaten home Premiership record to United amid much snapping and snarling between Wright and Schmeichel, appeared subdued and reflective. Wimbledon, who last lost a league match at Highbury nine seasons ago, were buoyantly confident.

Arsenal's encounter with United may be remembered for the wrong reasons but it saw more distinguished football than either side managed last Sunday. Paradoxically, there were no ugly fouls to compare with Wright's unpunished two-foot lunge at Schmeichel but it still found Leonhardsen limping out of Wimbledon's midfield on the quarter-hour and Morrow replacing the injured Bould in Arsenal's defence for the second half.

With Arsenal captained by Bould and the Dons led by Jones, the scenario could have been mistaken for a re-enactment of full and frank discussions between the Dillinger gang and the Dutch Schulz mob. Instead the game was studiously well-mannered.

"We're in the top six rather than the bottom six," Jones explained afterwards, "and desperate men do desperate things. In this game you get more recognition making four passes than four tackles."

It was hard to remember Arsenal ever putting as many passes together. Bergkamp's skills were glimpsed briefly, like gold in a mudslide, but once Wright, sent through by Bould in the 13th minute, had seen a shot rebound from Sullivan's right-hand post the Premiership's leading scorer became a peripheral figure.

With Adams still not recovered from the ankle injury which kept him out of England's defence against Italy, Wenger took the unusual step of employing the diminutive Garde as a third centre-back. Against Wimbledon's lofty attack, and especially in a high wind, this seemed a perverse choice.

In fact, the goal involved a more experienced Arsenal defender in Dixon, who headed Ardley's mishit attempt at a centre straight back to him. This time Ardley drifted the ball over the defence to Jones, who beat Lukic with a firm, low drive. It was his third goal of the season, and his second against Arsenal.

A combination of brave goalkeeping by Lukic and wayward finishing denied Wimbledon the second goal which would have spared them later anxiety. Arsenal created fewer chances but Bergkamp and Vieira still forced sharp saves in the last 20 minutes.

Perhaps the most revealing moments of the game came with the substitutions. In being able to bring Fear, McAllister and Holdsworth off the bench, Wimbledon revealed a greater depth of playing strength than their much wealthier opponents. For Kinnear that must have been nearly as satisfying as the result.

"I didn't expect us to create as many chances as we did," said Kinnear. "I've had so much confidence in the side. The squad system is working very well."



Air we go . . . Ole Solskjaer rises above Dennis Wise to set up another Manchester United attack against Chelsea at Stamford Bridge. The game ended in a 1-1 draw, giving United a valuable point to stay top of the Premiership table PHOTOGRAPH: DAN SMITH

Cryptic crossword by Araucaria

Across

1 Dig out in the rain at the bottom of the can (6)
4 Not Southern English apple, one with approximately yellow colouring (8)
9 Trauma followed love for Wilde (5)
10 Declaration of a fellow, if backing what lowers a boat (9)
11 Accept awfully green person on boat etc (9)
12 One of three in song or two (or one) in play (5)
13 Polite and impolite freedom? (6,7)
17 Thief's crucial advance finds ways to rob the Gurkha (12)
20 Colour, sound, and music in the earth (5)
21 Lumps — young thing argues, sadly (4,5)
23 See what the calendar shows, about scrambled egg at porter's entrance (5,4)
24 The singer's fatherland? We hear they go in schools (5)
25 Political entity, the Press without the 4 (3,5)
26 Feed and read (6)

Down

1 Cards for carding? (8)
2 Break the ice with dives that are crucial (8)
3 Jane's holding one in the nest (5)
5 International body's fake battle, faked as we all recall (13)
6 Church leader to tread unsteadily in back room (9)
7 Vicar setter has to wake up (6)
8 Beast with outlet for others (6)
10 One note in command in a singular county and another in cathedral music (8,5)
14 Trial by peers with game at headquarters (4'1,4)
15 See 18
16 He's a prig: quietly get up when he's around (8)
18,15 One allowed a little patisserie girl to be eaten by a dog: there's a story and a half! (6,8)
19 Blur of wild geums round Diana's head (6)
22 Broadcaster could be worse (5)

Last week's solution

```
PROVERB#RELAPSE
E#P#I#R#E#E#L#A
RETURNING#STAIR
C#I#E#T#I#S#S#L
HOCK#DISSIPATED
##A#W#S#T#E#E#O
#BLEACH#EARDRUM
####S#C#R#S####
SATCHMO#ENOUGH#
I#A#I#L#D#N#R##
DELINQUENT#MASS
E#L#G#M#U#C#V#T
CLEFT#BARRACUDA
A#S#O#I#S#N#R#T
ROTUNDA#EXTREME
```

Football

Soccer pair face charge

Martin Thorpe

THE Football Association will this week charge Ian Wright and Peter Schmeichel with misconduct, after the incidents at Highbury on Wednesday last week.

It is understood that the FA feels it has no option but to take action against the pair after their highly publicised confrontation at the end of the Arsenal v Manchester United game when Wright had to be restrained.

On Sunday the FA's chief executive Graham Kelly said: "Disciplinary proceedings are virtually inevitable following Wednesday's incident." Kelly has offered to act as mediator between the feuding pair, though he made it clear that "a gesture of goodwill would not preclude any disciplinary proceedings".

Schmeichel already faces a possible criminal charge for alleged racist remarks to Wright when the sides met at Old Trafford in November. According to one report last Sunday a lip-reading expert reviewing a video of that match spotted the keeper apparently hurling racial abuse at him.

However, Wright has denied that he had accused Schmeichel of making further racist remarks to him after Wednesday's game. He said he had been misreported.

Golf

Winner Price earns a break

Guardian Reporter

NICK PRICE promised himself an immediate holiday after defeating David Frost in a play-off in the South African PGA championship at Johannesburg's Houghton club last Sunday.

The Zimbabwean had a nervous wait after returning a 66 for a 19-under-par 269 as Frost fought back to level the scores with a birdie on the 18th.

"I've run it a bit too hard these last few weeks," said Price, who parred the first play-off hole to beat Frost after the South African missed his putt. "It's been a bit like going 10 rounds in the ring with Mike Tyson. I need a break. I'm going to do nothing this week."

Alone in third spot was the South African Nico van Renasburg, who had started the day four shots behind Frost. He was followed by Retief Goosen, also of South Africa, who was two shots back on 272.

Price lost his temper with himself after a three-putt led to a dropped shot at the 3rd, and that was when the tournament took off. "I got really angry with myself," he said. "I knew that today I had to do something to be up there, and sometimes you need that type of wake-up call."

Inside: Training for Business 8-page supplement

The Guardian Weekly

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Tories in turmoil as Labour tightens grip

Martin Kettle

WITH less than two months to polling day in the British general election, Tony Blair is surging towards the commanding victory that eluded the Labour party five years ago, according to the last Guardian/ICM poll before the 1997 campaign officially begins.

In the latest poll, conducted after Labour's capture of Wirral South at last week's byelection, the party's national lead over the Conservatives has increased by two points since last month, widening the gap to 18 points, more than enough to take Mr Blair to Downing Street and to plunge the Tory party into civil war.

The adjusted March figures show Labour on 48 per cent (no change on last month's figures), Conservatives 30 (down 2), Liberal Democrats 16 (up 1) and others 6 (up 2).

The poll reflects the 17 per cent swing to Labour in Wirral South last week where Ben Chapman won the safe Tory seat with a 7,888 majority for Labour. He overturned the Conservatives' 8,138 majority in 1992 on a large, 73 per cent turnout of the Merseyside electorate.

The chances of the election being held on May 1 — Mr Major's preferred date — were substantially boosted last week after he struck a deal with the nine Ulster Unionist MPs to guarantee their support for his minority government in exchange for a key constitutional demand: the establishment of a Northern Ireland Grand Committee on the lines of the one that exists for Scotland.

To add to the unrelieved electoral gloom for the Conservatives this week's opinion poll finds that voters are utterly divided about who should lead their party after the election. Mr Major remains narrowly the most popular choice, with Michael Heseltine and Baroness Thatcher trailing second and third. Eighty-four per cent of all voters say a change at the top of the Tory party would make no difference to their voting intention.

Labour's lead of 18 points completes a consistently strong year of pre-election opinion poll dominance. Although the gap between the parties has ranged between 12 and 21 points over the past 12 months, Labour's share of the poll has remained steady on 48 per cent in each month so far this year.

This forms a dramatic contrast with the situation in the run-in to the last general election in April 1992. In the 12 months before that election, the Conservatives twice got on level terms with Labour in the polls, and in January 1992 even nosed narrowly ahead of Neil Kinnock's party. In 1991-92 Labour's share of the poll rose briefly only once to 45 per cent, whereas this time it has not fallen below that mark since Mr Blair became leader in July 1994.

But the consistent strength of Labour's position in 1997, as distinct from the close and changing contest in 1992, means that only a dramatic last-minute upset or a total methodological meltdown by the pollsters can prevent Mr Blair from becoming the first Labour prime minister since James Callaghan in 1979.

Translating poll figures into seats at Westminster is a notoriously inexact science, but according to the BBC-ITN guide to the new parliamentary constituencies, this month's poll figures would give Labour 424 seats in the new House of Commons, with the Conservatives on 173, the Liberal Democrats 35, and others 27, an overall Labour majority of 189. Few psephologists believe that Labour will manage such a spectacular landslide. Two experts have predicted majorities of 85 and 125 respectively.

ICM interviewed a random sample of 1,201 adults aged 18 and over by telephone between February 28 and March 2. Interviews were conducted across Britain and the results have been weighted to the profile of all adults.

Ewen MacAskill and Michael White write: Labour and the Liberal Democrats were meeting this week to try to finalise a ground-breaking agreement on the biggest raft of constitutional reforms this century.

Despite differences, the two sides are under pressure to reach a deal before the election. Such cross-party discussion on a programme for government is rare in British politics.

The joint document they hope to publish would list agreement on: creation of a Scottish parliament and Welsh assembly; an independent electoral commission to investigate the mechanics of holding a referendum on proportional representation for the Commons; the abolition of hereditary peers; and introduction of a Freedom of Information Act.





An Albanian waves a rifle at an anti-government demonstration in Vlore on Sunday PHOTO: YANNIS BERHRAKIS

Albania cuts links with world

Joanna Robertson in Tirana

ALBANIA, until recently the most secretive society in Europe, retreated back behind closed doors on Monday.

Enraged by days of rioting bordering on anarchy, the government in Tirana cracked down hard on its insurgent opponents, cut links to the outside world, imposed a night-time curfew and blackout on independent media, and empowered police to shoot to kill demonstrators.

The clampdown met with condemnation from the international community, even as foreigners were airlifted from the strife-torn south of the country by an Italian air-force convoy.

But despite the ferocity of the regime's response to the unrest, fighting continued in the southern town of Fier between protesters from nearby Vlore and the Albanian army. The state-run news said the violence was the result of an attack by "terrorist groups" on the military headquarters in Fier. Witnesses said the army did not seem to be fighting hard.

Greek diplomats and witnesses said tanks had been seen in the southern town of Gjirokaster, and gunfire from automatic weapons could occasionally be heard.

Reports from Vlore ceased during the day, as telephone lines were blocked off and links to mobile telephones cut.

As part of a severe clampdown on the press as well as its own citizens and political opposition, the government ensured that no further television pictures from Albania can now reach the outside world, closing down a European Broadcasting Union satellite used by foreign networks.

Britain was among the countries joining in the condemnation, with the Foreign Secretary, Malcolm Rifkind, protesting about the harassment of journalists and calling for the observation of "democratic norms".

Even as the crackdown proceeded, Albania's president, Sali Berisha, was elected by his party's majority in parliament for a second five-year term on Monday, with only one vote against. Supporters celebrated with gunfire outside his Democratic Party headquarters.

The United States said it strongly regretted the imposition of emergency measures and parliament's vote to re-elect President Berisha. "This step is likely to increase polarisation rather than facilitate a solution," the state department spokesman, Nicholas Burns, said.

Albania's political opposition was neutralised and clueless as to how it should proceed. The state of emergency bans all political activity, including "all sport, cultural or union activity". A leader of the opposition Forum for Democracy said: "There is nothing we can do, we have been temporarily outlawed."

The country is now effectively run by the Shik secret police, and its leader, General Bashkim Gazidede. The "Council of Defence" at the apex of this formerly opaque force now commands the interior ministry and, through it, the state of emergency.

In Tirana, the atmosphere was tense. Roadblocks were operating on all routes out of the capital. Queues formed outside bakeries, as panic buying set in.

Armed police were on guard on Monday outside the ransacked and gutted premises of Fidel's Cafe in Tirana, near the offices of Albania's only independent newspaper.

Fidel's, a popular meeting place for journalists and intellectuals — and recently the Albanian capital's news hub — had had its windows smashed and been set alight. Whoever had decided to burn down the offices of the Koha Jone newspaper had returned to finish the job.

The only sources of news now available to Albanians — many of whom live in remote rural areas — are state-run radio and television.

Albania's European Union neighbours, Italy and Greece, expressed concern that the strife could unleash a wave of refugees and renew instability elsewhere in the Balkans.

Both countries pressed for urgent action, co-ordinated by the EU. But an Italian report from Brussels suggested that a meeting of senior officials to discuss the crisis was unlikely before Wednesday.

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Dolly rattles world of ethics 7
Yardies outwit Scotland Yard 20

Austria	AS30	Malta	50c
Belgium	BF75	Netherlands	G 4.75
Denmark	DK16	Norway	NK 16
Finland	FM 10	Portugal	E300
France	FF 13	Saudi Arabia	SR 6.50
Germany	DM 4	Spain	P 300
Greece	DR 450	Sweden	SK 19
Italy	L 3,000	Switzerland	SF 3.30

Feminism is alive and thriving in Africa

THE hapless graduate student (if she is real) in Robert Lacville's Letter from Bamako (February 16) is indeed immeasurably ill-prepared to undertake social research in Africa. While students such as her may appear ridiculous, they are clearly harmless compared with reactionary voices such as Lacville's, which add to the growing backlash against African feminists.

Indeed, Lacville shows condescension to the many African feminists who have forged their own brands of feminism. Contrary to Lacville's beliefs, all African women are not happy with the status quo of gender relations, nor puzzled by imported Western feminist thinking.

In Zimbabwe, where I live as one of those laughable foreign feminist academics, there is a plethora of African feminist groups. They set their own priorities and define their own struggles.

In my own research, centred around rural life, women seem to have no trouble finding words to talk about "gender issues" (which Lacville has such a hard time grasping). They talk about power in household decision-making, male control of income and key resources such as land, as well as wife battery, male drunkenness and adultery . . . the list goes on.

Why do male African nationalists, and white male expatriates like Lacville, leap so quickly to label feminism as "Western cultural imperialism"? "African culture" and "tradition" seem no obstacle to overt capitalist greed, Western clothing and consumer tastes. However, when women speak out for greater respect, "culture" and "tradition" become sacrosanct.

But most deplorable on a personal level, perhaps, is Lacville's use of the story to highlight his own generosity as the provider of the loan to the African businesswoman. Are white male expatriates, then, the ones to "save" African women? Talk about Western imperialism!
Allison Goebel,
Harare, Zimbabwe

THE glee with which Robert Lacville sets up and knocks down women's issues using his "Pat . . . an American PhD" is tiring.

When you report on women's efforts to study inequity or to build equality, may we have something more than cackling-patriarch-skillfully-skewers-woman researcher?

I suggest you track down "Pat" the PhD, last seen discarded on Lacville's trash heap. Invite her to write half a page about her experience in studying in Mali. Better idea: have Lacville extend the invitation.
Robert Spottswood,
Hanover, New Hampshire, USA

Concern for Commonwealth

YOUR report that Palestinian representatives are exploring the possibility of joining the Commonwealth (February 23) is intriguing but, given that the Commonwealth is reviewing its membership criteria, the prospect is premature.

The likely criteria would include a commitment to the Harare Declaration and pre-existing connections with the Commonwealth, usually through the former British Empire. Human rights bodies may query the quality of a Harare commitment in areas now under Palestinian rule.

The Commonwealth has yet to prove that it can guarantee basic rights for the peoples of existing member states. This is not just evident in the difficult case of the military dictatorship in Nigeria; in the neighbouring state of Cameroon, which joined the Commonwealth in 1995 after a report to the Secretariat that was never made public, there are serious and continuing concerns.

All in all, the Commonwealth still has much work to do in deepening the Harare process in its present 53 members (one suspended). It should be cautious about giving in to any recidivist imperialism.
Richard Bourne,
Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, London

Not all Boers are bad

YOUR article (Still slaves to the Cape grape, February 16) paints only part of the picture.

I grew up on a farm in Paarl, Western Cape. My dad (a white Afrikaner) used to give his workers "dop" in the evenings till about 1973. Then he stopped, not because of outside pressure but because he realised that as a Christian he was supposed to build lives up, not break them down.

After the disposal of the "dop" system on our farm, it became my dad's goal not only to convince his fellow farmers to do the same but also to invest in his workers' lives. He sent those who wanted to break with alcoholism to rehabilitation centres and those who showed potential for further training in pruning, leadership etc.

My dad died before the birth of the new South Africa. The liberals won't consider him a liberal; he didn't march in the streets or attract international attention. He was an ordinary man with failings who tried to do what was right.

Unfortunately the "dop" system still exists in the Western Cape. However, there are other farmers like my dad, who rejected this system and who are investing in their workers. Not all "Boers" are bad.
E Theron,
Malaga, Spain

Quebec benefits from Canada

ANNE McILROY, a respected Canadian journalist, got it just about right (Quebec separatists fall out with leader, February 2). Quebec's Premier Lucien Bouchard has a history of performing political double back-flips, oscillating between being a staunch supporter of Quebec independence and serving in the federal cabinet.

Mr Bouchard's vacillation may ultimately lead to his political demise, only to be replaced by a hardline separatist. Meantime, however, proponents of federalism have a window of opportunity of perhaps two years before the next provincial election. During that time they must convince the majority of Québecois of the tremendous benefits they receive from being part of Canada, a country the United Nations ranks as number one in the world in terms of human development. Québecois must also be made aware of what they stand to lose should they secede from Canada.

It is unfortunate that many (though by no means all) French-speaking Québecois feel so little attachment to Canada. Once French commerce and exploration ruled most of North America. Nafta now provides an excellent vehicle for Quebec to reconquer North America economically. Why set up new walls when old ones are being torn down all over the world?
Gerald Graham,
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

Victims of the rich and powerful

I CAME across an aged beggar today in the streets of Trogir, Croatia. Thinking I was with the German Army S-for contingent, he asked me in German if I had some coins in my pocket. No, I answered, I am Swiss. Ach, he answered, what is the difference? He then showed me his Dachau tattoo as a political prisoner. I gave him 3 Marks.

How quickly I reacted. And how quickly our Swiss banks have reacted to charges of hoarding funds belonging to Jews murdered by the Nazis (Swiss banks set up fund for Jewish victims, February 16). As good bankers anywhere, they have understood the dangerous predicament in which history, geography and crass greed have put them — exposed war profiteers. Now let us turn our eyes toward other bankers and ask ourselves: have they not also profited from opportunities where the first casualties were the innocent? Shall we not mention the colossal profits made by US banks during the Vietnam war?

But this is not simply a question of banks or lost capital of those wealthy Jews who had to share the fate of poor or modest Jews, and who lost that irreplaceable treasure: life and the pursuit of happiness. Far more important is justice for all victims of the unbounded greed of the rich and powerful.
Michael Sidman,
Tuzla, Bosnia

Learning for its own sake

"THERE is a limit to how many extra graduates the economy can absorb before the increased productivity they generate starts to decline." So says the Department for Education (Britain to squeeze student numbers, February 16). What does this mean? Surely the issue, even adopting the DfEE's limited focus, is whether the marginal increase in production they generate exceeds the marginal cost of their education. Where "increased productivity . . . starts to decline" is an issue only the Red Queen could handle.

There is still room for expansion of effort, not least in the philosophy department, which might stimulate a discussion about whether government should recognise any non-GDP reasons to educate people. Otherwise, when the machines take over, we will need only MIT for the cyber-space priesthood and perhaps Acme School of Computer Repair for the occasional servicing job which cannot be handled by the artificial-intelligence-enhancement and auto-maintenance modules.
Brian A Jones,
Brooklyn, New York, USA

Briefly

REGARDING the Helms-Burton Act, the United States plans to use a ploy worthy of the courtroom dramas Americans so dearly love. No doubt knowing it would probably lose if its case were presented in a reasonable light before the World Trade Organisation, the US seeks to invoke "national security" to get the case off the agenda.

The sight of the US continuing its bullying behaviour towards Cuba would be farcical if it did not materially affect other countries' business ties and strengthen Washington's stranglehold on trade. Hasn't Cuba had enough? Haven't we all?
Brian Pedersen,
Kagoshima, Japan

IT IS neither surprising nor scandalous that the French voters of Vitrolles ignored the advice to "bar the FN's path" (The Front's stain on democracy, February 23).

When the conventional political parties tell voters to switch between them, it only reinforces the impression that they are a cosy, corrupt clique with very little to differentiate them. Faced with a choice between endorsing failed pragmatism or making a shocking protest vote, most of us, anywhere, would be surely tempted by the latter.
Richard Eames,
Altrincham, Cheshire

THE Old Salt, Sam Micklem (February 23) should be able to recall that there is another "irreproachable tradition", of far greater age and of far greater respect, which says, "Take care of children". A million dollars to save one man, against the vaccination of a million children. During his life at sea, he must have had to make a choice between a traditional course and a hard reality.
G L Kesteren,
Hurstville, NSW, Australia

YOUR report that the Foreign Office is investigating allegations that the Indonesian government has broken its undertaking not to use British-made water cannons and armoured vehicles to crush peaceful dissent (February 23) prompts me to ask for what other purpose it might have bought such equipment.
Ron Westerman,
Bayreuth, Germany

IT IS not British justice that wrongly locked up the Bridgewater Three, but the judiciary's constant refusal to apply the major principle of British justice, ie, that a person's innocence should be assumed until proof otherwise is established. This is held to be the case at the initial trial, but once that is over, appeal judges assume that an applicant is guilty until proved otherwise.
Colin Burke,
Withington, Manchester

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Jerusalem settlement angers Arabs

Shyam Bhatia in Jerusalem

ISRAEL headed for a new crisis with the Palestinians and attracted swift Arab and international condemnation after the government approved a controversial plan last week to build 6,500 new Jewish homes in Arab east Jerusalem.

Amid warnings of new violence that could undermine the fragile peace process, a cabinet committee gave the go-ahead for a project that is widely seen as an attempt to pre-empt a decision on the final status of the city, supposed to be decided in future negotiations under the 1993 Oslo accords.

On Monday, Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip held a one-day general strike in protest at Israel's decision to build the new Har Homa Jewish settlement to the southeast of Jerusalem.

But even as the Palestinians were holding rallies and demonstrations throughout the day, the Israeli authorities confirmed that the defence minister, Yitzhak Mordechai, had approved the building of 1,500 additional houses for Jewish settlers in Maaleh Adumim, another settlement between Jerusalem and Jericho. The plan includes several hotels on confiscated Arab land.

"This new Israeli settler plan is part of an overall scheme to suffocate several Arab villages and kill the Palestinians' dream of establishing an independent state with East Jerusalem as its capital," said a Palestinian cartographer, Khalil Tafakji, who monitors the building of Jewish settlements.

The prime minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, touring an Arab area of Jerusalem, promised to improve infrastructure in the Arab half of the city. "What we are doing today is making . . . Jerusalem one city for Jews and Arabs alike," he said.

The protests were comparatively quiet. But the Israeli security forces took no chances. Thousands of soldiers were deployed along the borders of Palestinian areas and the army suspended joint patrols with the Palestinian police and declared West Bank cities closed military zones.

President Clinton lent limited support on Monday to Yasser Arafat's appeal for United States pressure to stop the Israeli plan to build the Har Homa settlement.

Welcoming the Palestinian Authority president to the White House, Mr Clinton stressed the US expectation that all protests would be peaceful. "This is a difficult moment, but I think we can work through it and go forward," he said.

"The important thing is for these people on both sides to be building confidence and working together. And so I would prefer the decision [to build Har Homa] not have been made, because I don't think it builds confidence. I think it builds mistrust."

Mr Clinton, who closely heeds the powerful Israel lobby in the US, moderated his criticism of the Netanyahu government, and gave Mr Arafat little hope of serious US pressure.

The Palestinians were planning a huge rally after prayers on Friday and early estimates suggested that at least 10,000 protesters would converge on the controversial mountain called Har Homa by the Jews and Jabal Abu Ghneim by the Arabs.

Significantly, Palestinian Christians — who say the site includes the ruins of Crusader era churches — are expected to join the rally.

Palestinian leaders warned this week that violence would erupt on the day Israeli bulldozers arrived to start levelling the Har Homa site.

Comment, page 12

Castro offers asylum to Lima rebels

James Craig in Lima

AN OFFER by Cuba to grant asylum to Marxist rebels holding 72 hostages in Peru's capital during a surprise visit to Havana by the Peruvian president, Alberto Fujimori, has heightened speculation about a bloodless end to the crisis.

President Fujimori flew back to Lima on Tuesday after his talks with Cuba's leader, Fidel Castro, who he said had agreed to grant asylum to the rebels if this was acceptable to all sides.

"Cuba is willing to co-operate in the framework for this asylum but not to participate as a mediator," said Mr Fujimori, who had arrived in Havana after visiting the Dominican Republic.

"I was received by President Castro with a great deal of understanding. It was a fruitful conversation."

About 20 rebels of the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA) are holding the captives at the Japanese ambassador's residence in Lima in Latin America's longest hostage crisis, now in its 12th week.

Mr. Fujimori's comments at a press conference in Havana confirmed weeks of speculation that Cuba may be asked to give refuge to the rebels as part of a possible deal to end the siege.

He quoted President Castro as saying Cuba would be willing to take the rebels if it received a formal request from Peru's government, the Japanese government, crisis mediators and the rebels.

Mr Fujimori said Cuba's position would be relayed to Peruvian officials negotiating with the rebels, who would pass the message on to the rebel group.

In Lima on Tuesday, mediators and government negotiators strolled into a safe house across the street from the captured residence for the eighth round of talks.

However, Mr Fujimori's announcement had been preceded by a denial from the MRTA spokesman in Europe that rebels would seek asylum outside Peru. "We are not thinking about leaving Peru," the spokesman, Isaac Velasco, told reporters in Spain — *Reuter*



Children pick up beans after the distribution of food in Tingi Tingi refugee camp, southeast of Kisangani, Zaire. Aid workers fear that the rebels, who are advancing on several fronts towards Kisangani, the centre of army resistance in the region, may attack the camp

Turkish army curbs Islamist ambitions

Chris Nuttall in Ankara

THE powerful armed forces of Turkey chose political rather than military intervention last weekend to fight off what they see as an Islamic fundamentalist threat to the 74-year-old secular republic.

After weeks of speculation about a fourth military coup since 1960, Turkish newspapers reported last Sunday that a 20-point plan to combat Islamic extremism had been presented to the government.

A nine-hour national security council (NSC) meeting ended with a statement saying measures were being taken against anti-secular activities and the cabinet would be informed of them.

Turkey's first Islamist prime minister, Necmettin Erbakan of the Welfare party, said that the top brass and politicians were now "in complete harmony" on national issues. He said he would meet this week with opposition leaders, who have been trying to topple his eight-month-old coalition government, "to expand further the atmosphere of tranquillity and security in the country".

Tranquillity has been hard to find. The military sent tanks through the streets of the Ankara suburb of Sincan last month after a Welfare party rally advocating the introduction of *sharia* law.

Mr Erbakan himself was taken to task by the NSC for proposing Islamic reforms to the secular constitution during the Muslim fast of Ramadan. His suggestions included lifting a ban on women wearing Muslim headscarves in government offices and educational institutions.

The chief of general staff and commanders of the army, navy and air force confronted the prime minister with intelligence about a rise in radical Islamic activities. Their concerns included a big increase in the number of guns sold in Welfare strongholds and the party's links with Islamic groups abroad.

The NSC has traditionally been merely an advisory body making recommendations to the cabinet. But the military, which sees itself as the guarantor of the secular republic established by Kemal Ataturk in 1923, now appears to be using the council as a vehicle to impose its will.

The 20-point plan would reverse many of the policies pursued by Welfare. It calls for closer supervision of religious instruction, enforcement of bans on Islamic dress and action against the Islamic brotherhoods. The military wants strict controls placed on the sale of pump-action shotguns and a ban on government hiring of anyone with fundamentalist sympathies.

Opposition politicians have tabled two censure motions to try to bring down the government. The leader of the opposition, Mesut Yilmaz, was expected to present another this week and has called for a government of national unity.

"Let's forget our differences and co-operate for a new government to avoid a coup and prevent the system from being disrupted," he told a meeting of his Motherland party.

The president, Suleyman Demirel, the victim of coups when prime minister in 1971 and 1980, has also indicated that circumstances are conspiring for a military intervention.

Thais urged to halt Karen expulsion

Nick Cumming-Bruce in Bangkok

THE United States has asked Thailand to the halt forced repatriation of Karen refugees across its border into Burma, where the army is waging a ferocious offensive intended to crush a more than 40-year old rebellion by the Karen National Union (KNU).

A senior Thai army officer denied last week that anyone had been forced back but reports from the border suggested more Karen were set to be repatriated.

In a rare criticism of Thailand, which the US considers a close ally in the region, the state department spokesman, Nicholas Burns, expressed regret at the action of the Thai military deporting 900 Karen, including women and children.

He called on Thai authorities "to recommence the provision of asylum until conditions in Burma permit their safe and voluntary return".

The commander of the Thai division said to have carried out the repatriation denied that it had happened. "There is no such forcible repatriation as they charge," Major General Thaweep Suwannasing said. "We allow in all the civilian refugees, but armed men believed to be guerrillas are banned from crossing the border [into Thailand]."

But the UN High Commissioner for Refugees said last week that it was "very much distressed" to hear that the Thai army planned to send a further 2,000 Karen back. A journalist barred by soldiers from visiting a group of about 1,000 Karen on the border last week reported an officer as saying about half of them, including women and children, were to be sent back.

Such forced returns mark an abrupt about turn on Thailand's previous treatment of fleeing Burmese minorities. More than 10,000 Karen have fled into Thailand this month to escape a ferocious Burmese military onslaught along the border. They join some 90,000 Burmese refugees already housed in camps along the border — plus tens of thousands more who have slipped into Thai towns and cities to find work.

"We are concerned about where the original instructions [for the repatriation] came from and whether this is a change of policy on the part of the Thai authorities," one relief agency official said. "People were beginning to think the whole refugee population might be affected."

After decades of support for the KNU, Thai leaders are now focusing on building diplomatic and business ties with the military junta in Rangoon. Next year Thailand will start to take delivery of large volumes of Burmese gas delivered by a pipeline running through Karen areas of eastern Burma.

Other big ventures are likely to follow. The Thai prime minister, Chavalit Yongchaiyudh, rumoured to have extensive business interests in Burma, is an enthusiastic proponent of large joint infrastructure projects.

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Germans take politics to the streets

Ralf Bode in Dannenberg

A TRAIN carrying a controversial shipment of nuclear waste arrived at its destination in northern Germany on Tuesday after being delayed by anti-nuclear activists, and unloading began under heavy police guard.

Hundreds of police stood by to ward off any disruptive protests by activists as work started on unloading six 90-tonne containers, likely to last much of the day, in the town of Dannenberg.

The cargo consists of highly radioactive waste from power plants in Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg, and from the French reprocessing plant at La Hague. It is expected to be transported to the Gorleben nuclear storage depot, 20km away, on Wednesday. There it faces the prospect of further disruption. Thousands of activists have camped at Gorleben awaiting the shipment's arrival.

The shipment from southern Germany arrived by train eight hours late during the early hours of the morning after a 20-hour journey disrupted by several protests by activists along the route.

Two demonstrators who dug holes under a railway track near Dannenberg and cemented their arms inside with quick-drying cement caused the longest delay. Around 5,000 demonstrators near the station greeted the train's arrival with boos and whistles.

Police deployed in Germany's biggest post-war security operation said up to 2,000 activists had defied a ban on demonstrations along the route on Monday.

Militant protesters pelted riot police with stones. Some activists set up burning barricades to block a road the truck convoy was expected to use. Others tunnelled under other parts of the likely route to weaken the road structure. Police said it was possible one road would have to be closed.



Masked anti-nuclear demonstrators stone riot police in Dannenberg on Monday PHOTOGRAPH: MICHAEL PROBST

The train set off from the southern town of Walheim early on Monday, carrying waste from two German power stations and a French reprocessing plant, and made its way northwards across Germany during the day.

Some 30,000 police and border troops lined tracks along its route. Police helicopters circled overhead.

The security operation is likely to cost at least $39 million and surpass the $27 million spent on bringing a smaller shipment to Gorleben last year. — *Reuter*

Ian Traynor in Bonn adds: Thousands of young German neo-Nazis marched through the centre of Munich last weekend, giving the Hitler salute and singing Nazi songs in support of the wartime German army in one of the biggest demonstrations by the extreme right in recent years.

The march, involving mainly skinheads, was ostensibly aimed at countering assertions that ordinary German soldiers played a substantial role in the Holocaust. Hundreds of elderly Germans, many of them second world war soldiers, joined the march. The procession of about 5,000 supporters of the extreme right sought to converge opposite the town hall where a controversial exhibition documenting the Wehrmacht's wartime crimes opened last week.

A counter-demonstration by some 8,000 leftwingers and anti-Nazis tried to block the extremists, some hurling eggs, bricks and bottles at the neo-Nazis.

The Week

PRESIDENT Clinton defied a powerful bipartisan campaign in Congress and recertified Mexico as a co-operative partner in the war on drugs.
Washington Post, page 17

SOUTH Africa's former police minister, Adriaan Vlok, has applied to the country's truth commission for an amnesty. The move makes him the first member of an apartheid-era cabinet prepared to admit abuses.

MORE than 130 people died when a train crashed in Pakistan's Punjab province after being switched to a dead-end line to avert a head-on collision with the Karachi-Lahore express.

SALVATORE Cassisa, aged 74, the Roman Catholic archbishop of Monreale, Sicily, has gone on trial for allegedly embezzling $480,000 of European Union money.

THOUSANDS of former Gurkha soldiers of the British army marched in Nepal's capital, Kathmandu, demanding pensions and other benefits on a par with their UK counterparts.

MULTIMILLIONAIRE John du Pont was found guilty of murder, but jurors in a US court decided that mental illness played a role in his shooting of Olympic wrestler David Schultz.

THE Russian novelist Andrei Sinyavsky, whose trial in 1966 for writing "anti-Soviet works" is considered the start of dissidence against communist rule, has died in Paris aged 71.
Obituary, page 27

PRESIDENT Boris Yeltsin has ordered the Russian government to sign a European convention banning capital punishment.

THE Taliban militia in Afghanistan has banned the sale of books and magazines published outside the country.

SADDAM Hussein, the Iraqi leader, is suing the editor of France's Nouvel Observateur magazine because of an article calling him a "pathetic simpleton".

SWITZERLAND has agreed to set up a multimillion dollar fund — described by its leading bankers as "a moral gesture" — for victims of the Holocaust.

THE Republican Society in the Netherlands, which consists of former ministers, top bankers, industrialists and journalists, has launched a campaign to abolish the monarchy.

TENNIS star Boris Becker is to quit Germany for an expatriate life with his wife and son in Florida because he feels hounded by the German tax authorities.

London confronts Bonn and Paris over EU ambitions

Ian Black in Paris and Ian Traynor in Bonn

THE British Foreign Secretary, Malcolm Rifkind, urged the European Union this week to start thinking about the "limits of integration" and end its "obsession" with revising the Maastricht treaty.

In a hard-hitting speech at the French Institute for International Relations in Paris on Monday, Mr Rifkind sought to widen the differences between France and Germany by insisting that the nation state must remain the "bedrock" of the EU and warning of popular alienation if it went beyond a partnership of nations.

"Our choices in 1997 will help determine the kind of Europe our children and grandchildren live in," he said. "Decisions in 1998 on a single currency will affect us all for years ahead. Short-term answers will have long-term results. We must be sure we are comfortable with them."

Mr Rifkind hopes to exploit mounting uncertainty over monetary union to fight off calls for increased majority voting, more power for the European Parliament, and central decision-making on justice and home affairs.

Proposals on all these points are being discussed as the Maastricht treaty review — an intergovernmental conference — moves towards a conclusion this summer. But the prospect of changing minds in Paris or Bonn seems poor.

France and Germany are to press on with their attempts to whittle away the national veto in the EU by tabling joint proposals next week on greater majority voting on foreign and security policy in the EU.

After talks in Bonn on Monday, the German foreign minister, Klaus Kinkel, and his French counterpart, Hervé de Charette, announced that they wanted to extend majority voting in the two policy areas and to embark on "institutional reform" of the EU to pave the way for negotiations on expansion into eastern Europe next year.

German officials said Paris and Bonn had agreed, down to the last letter, the joint proposals to be unveiled next week at a meeting of the inter-governmental conference that is reviewing the EU's powers, functions and treaties.

Both countries were agreed, said Mr Kinkel, that fundamental strategic decisions on EU foreign and security issues should be taken by consensus in the European Council.

Opposing the use of the national veto, which Britain insists on retaining, Mr de Charette said: "The question of decision-taking is very important and it is difficult to expand without solving this."

Death toll in Iran quakes likely to rise to 3,000

Sharif Imam-Jomeh

RESCUE teams battled snow almost knee-deep on Tuesday searching for more victims of two earthquakes that killed nearly 1,000 people and displaced 36,000 in mountainous northwest Iran, Red Crescent officials said.

"The search operation continues and we expect more casualties. The death toll is still 965 people, but we expect to dig out more bodies," a Red Crescent spokesman said.

Rescue workers said last weekend that at least 3,000 people — three times the official government figure — had died.

The official news agency Irna said heavy snow started to fall on the rugged region bordering Azerbaijan and the Caspian Sea on Monday night, "seriously hampering relief operations".

Iran's interior minister, Ali Mohammad Besharati, said most of the dead were killed in the first earthquake on Friday last week which measured 5.5 on the Richter scale.

He said there had been no reports on casualties from another quake of 5.2 on the Richter scale which hit the region last Sunday night or from around 350 aftershocks since last Friday.

Irna quoted him as saying release of the death toll from the first quake had been delayed because some people had buried relatives without registering them.

Mr Besharati said 2,600 people were injured and most had been released from hospitals. Those still in hospital were in satisfactory condition, he added.

"Some 11,200 houses were destroyed in the quake . . . rehabilitation of the quake-stricken areas will start soon with the support of government and public assistance" he said.

Ardabil is an agricultural province inhabited mainly by Iran's Azeri minority. It is one of the country's coldest regions with freezing temperatures during the winter.

Earthquakes hit Iran regularly. The worst recorded one, measuring 7.3 on the Richter scale, killed 35,000 people near the Caspian coast in 1990. — *Reuter*

● An earthquake in the southwestern Pakistani province of Baluchistan last week claimed at least 60 lives. The quake registered 7.3 on the Richter scale.

The epicentre of the quake was in the Suleiman mountains east of Quetta, but villages hundreds of kilometres away felt the shock.

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Georgia rebels hold out against the world

James Meek in Tbilisi

ONE MONUMENT differs from all the others in the art-loving, sculpture-rich capital of President Eduard Shevardnadze's Georgia: people live in it. In the old heart of Tbilisi, glowering sourly down from its 16 storeys, a slender green obelisk stands apart, its balconies draped with bedsheets, nappies and worn-out clothes.

Welcome to the Hotel Iveria, a human war memorial to a war that has not yet ended. Some cities might try to keep their refugee problem away from their central shopping streets — not Tbilisi. Four years after a quarter of a million Georgians fled the rebel territory of Abkhazia before advancing separatist forces, only a fraction have gone home.

If locals strolling down Rustaveli Avenue or foreign investors sniffing the air of post-communism's next hot market might be tempted by early signs of economic stability to think the country is set fair for peace and prosperity, the refugee-stuffed Hotel Iveria is always there as a reminder of continuing problems.

Knock on a fifth-floor door at random. Soviet hotel rooms never made much concession to space or comfort. In a tiny space, perhaps 2.5m by 3m, there are eight people — four adults, four children — three beds and a table on which Lea Benidze's two young sons are doing their homework. The refugees live by debt, family charity and the usual petty trading. Each refugee gets an allowance of less than $3 a month.

Ms Benidze, aged 34, a nurse in the resort town of Gagra in Abkhazia, fled with her children in October 1992 when the war reached them — her husband and father died fighting the Abkhazian separatists. They left with little except the clothes they wore and have been in the hotel ever since. Benidze will leave only to go home to the place where her house was burnt to the ground, she said, and then only when Abkhazia is once again under Georgian rule.

"I don't want to see Abkhazians again — they brought such grief to me and my children. Look at this boy. He's never known what the love of a father is."

The Abkhazians, who drove the Georgians from the Black Sea territory in 1993 and declared themselves a nation state, feel just as hostile and bitter towards the Georgians.

Though their covert backers, the Russians, have now turned against them by imposing a limited economic blockade on Abkhazia's northern border, the Abkhazians are in no mood to compromise on their demand for statehood, a demand that the world has ignored.

Like other unrecognised territories scattered across the former Soviet Union, Abkhazia has become an institutionalised renegade micro-state, seen by the international community as part of Georgia but living outside its control.

Caucasian steel circle



It used to be thought that Russia, regional power-broker and one-time supplier of arms, currency and energy to rebel groups, held the key to ending the disputes in Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Nagorno-Karabakh and Chechenia which have left tens of thousands dead and more than 1.5 million displaced throughout the Caucasus.

Now, with the guns silent, Russia's influence is fast giving way to the seductive power of Western investment and Caspian oil revenues — and there is little sign of these awkward territories giving in to world pressure, allowing the return of refugees and acknowledging the authority of Tbilisi, Moscow or Baku.

Abkhazia, five hours' drive west of the Georgian capital, has become an eerie land of fear and isolation. The United Nations' only military force in the former USSR, a group of about 130 blue-helmeted observers known as Unomig, keeps an eye on another, larger peacekeeping force controlled by the Russians, who in turn try to ensure neither the Georgians nor the Abkhazians bring weapons into a buffer zone.

The former combatants, meanwhile, carry out small-scale acts of terrorism and revenge — a spate of skilfully laid anti-personnel mines has taken its toll of peacekeepers.

Last month three Russian soldiers were killed when their armoured troop-carrier hit a mine. Suspicion fell on a Georgian terrorist group, the White Legion, which regards Abkhazians, Russian troops, UN peacekeepers and Georgians who have returned to the territory as fair game.

Ethnic Georgians driven from Abkhazia are evidence of a war not yet ended PHOTOGRAPH: ROGER HUTCHINGS

Though about 40,000 ethnic Georgians have trickled back to their homes in the south of the territory, the impression on the road to the Abkhazian capital, Sukhumi, is of a paradise lost. Untended tea plantations and mandarin groves have run wild. Skinny, mottled pigs root about among palm trees in overgrown gardens of once magnificent bungalows, abandoned and stripped of glass, doors and window-frames. Clouds of scalding water from natural hot springs belch from ruptured pipes that once carried it to homes.

Yet the Abkhazian authorities refuse to give in, arguing that the international community's hasty recognition of an independent Georgia in 1992 was as arbitrary as its non-recognition of Abkhazia now. Abkhazia was a separate union republic, having equal status in the USSR with Georgia and Ukraine, before 1931, when Stalin — a Georgian — demoted it to an autonomous territory.

"Abkhazians heard hardly a word of sympathy in the West when they were forced to fight for their survival, evidently because they had the 'wrong' oppressor," argues Liana Kvarchelia, an Abkhazian academic. "Unlike Russia, whose power Western security interests want to limit, Georgia has been seen as needing to be strengthened, to help provide these limits."

Abkhazia's unrecognised president, Vladislav Ardzinba, says he is prepared to accept nothing short of full independence or an altogether new country, a Caucasian confederation in which Georgia and Abkhazia would be equal partners.

Neither option is acceptable to Georgia, now feeling more self-confident as a result of its role as a transit country for Western oil company exports from the Caspian to the Black Sea and a strengthening alliance with the two other pro-Western powers in the Commonwealth of Independent States, Ukraine and Azerbaijan.

The impasse applies to most of the other unrecognised micro-states as well. Despite their fragility and isolation, they are starting to look permanent.

The danger is that ultimately the states to which they supposedly belong will decide they can only be taken back by a resumption of the wars that created them — military sequels that will be better planned, better organised and hence more destructive than the originals.

South Pacific fears mercenary influx

Christopher Zinn in Sydney

PAPUA New Guinea's plan to use mercenaries in its war against rebels on the breakaway island of Bougainville ran into new controversy last week, despite government claims that the foreigners would be advisers with no combat role.

The revelation that the London-based company employing the freelances has written to two hospitals in northern Queensland asking about possible treatment arrangements for wounded personnel has put new pressure on Papua New Guinea's former colonial power, Australia, to reconsider its aid programme to the government in Port Moresby.

The letters, headed "Casualty evacuation from Papua New Guinea", inquired about emergency medical facilities and the evacuation of casualties from Papua New Guinea to Australia.

They represent the latest turn in a controversy that has dogged the Papua New Guinea government since its new strategy to deal with the rebel leadership in Bougainville became public in late January.

The 40 mercenaries, who are thought to come mainly from Australia, Zimbabwe and some other African countries, are supplied by the British-registered security consultants Sandline International, and will be intervening in a nine-year-old conflict that has cost several thousand lives.

Australia, which provides Papua New Guinea with aid worth $243 million a year, said the use of mercenaries would be unacceptable and could damage the two countries' relationship. New Zealand's prime minister, Jim Bolger, also joined the growing international condemnation. "I think the whole of the South Pacific would be concerned if mercenary troops were used in some way to try to impose a settlement there," he said.

The British High Commission in Port Moresby added: "Britain believes the use of private military consultants will only prolong the Bougainville conflict."

But the Papua New Guinea prime minister, Sir Julius Chan, has brushed away outside objections and is pushing ahead with the military solution. Sir Julius, who took power in 1994 with a promise to bring peace to Bougainville, said the "foreign defence advisers" had only been engaged to train Papua New Guinea soldiers "to get the criminals".

He said Sandline was a reputable company that had sub-contracted a South African-based firm, Executive Outcomes, to provide aircraft, equipment and training. But his assurances have not been widely accepted — and there are fears in Australia that the advisers will inevitably be drawn into the guerrilla war.

The bloody conflict began on Bougainville in 1988, when locals, unhappy with royalties and the environmental impact of the Panguna copper mine, staged direct action that escalated into a full-scale insurgency. Now almost 70,000 displaced islanders are housed in 49 government-run "care centres", where Amnesty International says residents are pushed into forced labour and women are raped.



Atrocities by both the Papua New Guinea Defence Force and the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA) have cost many lives. But the greatest losses have stemmed from a blockade of the island, which has prevented medicines and supplies from reaching civilians.

Moses Havini, a prominent member of the BRA's political wing, has called for Australia's defence co-operation agreement with Papua New Guinea to be brought to an end, along with aid worth $30 million.

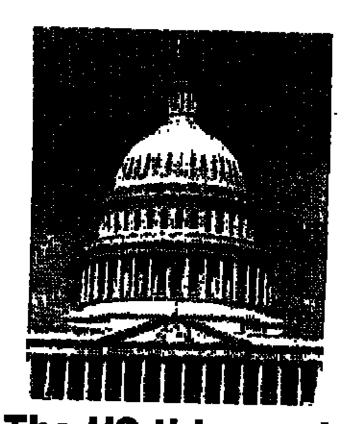
"We are seeing [Australian] taxpayers' money being used for killing and the promotion of suffering on the island," said Mr Havini. "The longer this is allowed to go on, the more damage it will do to the peace process in Bougainville."

The mercenary crisis blew up as an Amnesty International report claimed the Papua New Guinea Defence Force and the pro-government militia had killed or "disappeared" 44 Bougainvilleans over the past year.

The report said the Papua New Guinea government had allowed human rights violations to "reach heights not seen for several years".

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Home truths for the White House



The US this week

Martin Walker

THE VAST and hypocritical fuss over President Clinton's ruthless and money-grubbing deployment of all the assets of his office, from rides on Air Force One to overnight stays and coffees in the White House, dominated the week. At least, they did on the surface of events. But running far more deeply and more momentously in the bowels of the only superpower were other developments, to which I shall return.

"Bill Clinton and Al Gore have made the White House into the most expensive bed and breakfast in the history of the world," said Republican Congressman Dan Burton, who introduced legislation to curb the hospitality of the White House to generous campaign donors. He called this "rent control for the rich and famous", an acute soundbite, which testified to the Republican hope that finally, after Whitewater, Paula Jones and Travelgate, they have found something to erode the president's comfortable 60 per cent-plus approval ratings in the opinion polls.

A USA Today poll found 42 per cent of respondents said Clinton was "wrong" to host donors, and 53 per cent said it was "not relevant" to Clinton's stewardship of the presidency. Frank Luntz, the Oxford-educated Republican pollster, claims to have found some evidence of outrage in focus groups he convened in St Louis. Maybe. The front pages last week reproduced Clinton's curiously childlike handwriting in a comment on a memo from his chief fund-raiser, Terry McAuliffe, which said the president was "ready to start the overnights right away".

It is not illegal for presidents to use the perks of office in this way. President Bush did not invite the reactionary radio host Rush Limbaugh to spend the night at his White House for the pleasure of the loud-mouth's conversation. Clinton has, in his characteristically incontinent way with ethics, simply pushed the boundaries of presidential propriety beyond all known limits.

But the hypocrisy of most public comment is equally gross. The Republican leader, Senator Trent Lott, is refusing to schedule time for campaign finance reform, noting at a Palm Beach hotel weekend for the "Club 100" donors who each gave $100,000 a year to the Republicans that this was "the American way". Quite so. Other Republicans are demanding that their colleague Senator Fred Thompson exclude their own congressional fund-raising efforts from his hearings.

This is to be expected. Politicians are like that, which is why most public opinion seems to be shrugging off the revelations of Clinton's lavish way with the Lincoln bedroom. But the high-minded media pontification is offensive in its own way. The big newspaper chains, from the Washington Post to Gannett to Rupert Murdoch, own television stations, and these are the real beneficiaries of the American political system. Something like half of the money raised and spent by the politicians buys TV time. And I can recall no example of a TV station turning away some of the $85 million that Clinton was spending on air time in 1995 and early 1996 on the grounds that this made them co-conspirators in an inherently corrupt system.

It would be splendid if all this fuss led to serious reform of campaign finance. But the Republicans, who outraised and outspent the Democrats in the last election cycle, are not about to enact it. Clinton knows this, so his regular calls for reform have a distinctly hollow ring. The Supreme Court has ruled that campaign donations are a form of free speech. The American establishment — political, legal, media and corporate — are up to their collective necks in this swamp. But as long as they can keep their nostrils above the scum, and all benefit from the process, no serious change is to be expected.

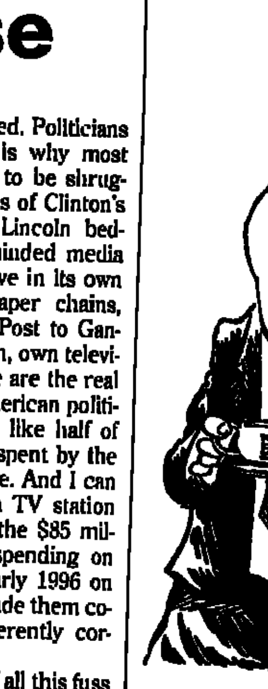
When fundamental change comes to a superpower as ponderous and pluralistic as the United States, it does so rather in the way that a supertanker changes course, some miles after the captain has given the order. And a change of huge significance for Europe is under way in the think-tanks and among the tight-knit community of policy-makers in the foreign policy establishment.

This may be the last thing Europe wants to hear as Britain prepares for an election, Germany and France grapple with mass unemployment, and everybody prepares to swallow Clinton's insistence that Nato be enlarged whatever the Russians may say. But the old continent is about to be made an offer it may find hard to swallow, but in the long run very difficult to refuse.

It is nothing less than a grandiose vision of a far more ambitious Nato alliance and a wider partnership designed to assert and defend Western interests around the globe. It involves Europe developing its own version of US military capabilities with air-mobile units and aircraft carriers, and being ready to share responsibility for securing such strategic regions as the Persian Gulf. And Europe was warned last week that its American alliance and the US's military engagement are likely to wither unless the European nations agree to sign up.

"Until Nato is reunited with American global strategy, Europe's importance to the US will continue to decline," asserts an influential group of former national security council staff members in an unprecedented study by the Rand Corporation published last week*. "The alternative to partnership is not American leadership and European independence, but American retreat and European isolation."

The argument comes with an impressive pedigree, from Rand itself, the first and probably most influential of the US's cold war think-tanks; from the credentials of the authors; and from the endorsement attached by former secretaries of state Henry Kissinger and George Shultz. It is also the first Rand study to be presented as passionate advocacy rather than cool analysis, a signal development in itself.





This is a sizeable chunk of the US foreign policy establishment thinking aloud, and their project deserves attention, if not alarm, because it is based on an American perception that global management is becoming too big for the US alone. After 50 years of dominating Nato, this study calls for the US to be ready to share the burden with Europe in full partnership.

"If Europe is willing and able to develop a partnership that produces better outcomes than America could achieve by itself, I believe the US public will accept limits on unilateral action," notes Bob Zoellick, the former state department counsel under James Baker. He was the most influential policy planner in the Bush administration, and my hot favourite to be national security adviser for the next Republican president.

EUROPEAN and US strategic interests may now be more closely in parallel than they were during the cold war, the study suggests. The world's two dominant economic units share an interest in advancing the global free trading system; in stabilising Russia, North Africa and the Middle East; and in safeguarding that 80 per cent of the world's energy reserves that are locked in the Middle East and the Caspian basin.

The Rand team assembles a largely Republican group of former officials from the Carter, Bush and Reagan administrations, from the Pentagon and state department, from the National Intelligence Council and the National Security Council at the White House, to devise what is presented as a grand strategy for the post-cold war world.

"Prosperity and security, political freedom and economic freedom — all on a global scale" are the goals of the proposed Grand Alliance, which was unveiled last week to cautious expressions of interest from the Clinton administration, and warnings that Europe might not be up to the job.

"Today's Europe falls far short of the Europe of our equal, global partnership," the Rand study concedes, but argues that such a new mission would do Europe good. "The concrete responsibilities that Europe would accept as part of that relationship would test and strengthen Europe, not break it. The danger to Europe — to the goal of a unified Europe — is not that too much will be asked of it, but too little".

The prospect of Europe's pampered voters supporting the higher defence budgets required to share the policing of the Persian Gulf and to build anything approaching the airlift and global logistic capabilities of the Americans strikes me as remote.

What we may have here is the recurrent tendency of élites to dream in grandiose geo-political terms, way beyond the horizons of the voters who must pay for them, which has already got the European project into trouble over the Maastricht treaty and the proposed new single currency. But American élites have achieved this sort of vision in the past, most notably in the Marshall Aid plan and the creation of Nato in the late 1940s.

The Rand proposal goes far beyond the Clinton administration's plan to enlarge Nato and its cautious advocacy of moving towards a transatlantic free trade area. It does, however, mesh closely with a series of forthcoming conferences on Nato's future and on long-range goals for US-EU economic integration that are being organised by the Pentagon, by that unusually intellectual defence chief, US Marine General John Sheehan, who is the current Saclant (Supreme Allied Commander in the Atlantic), and by the European Institute in Washington.

The Rand proposal not only asks Europe to agree to join the US in a global military role and presence, but also calls on the US to scale down its traditional assumption of alliance leadership and share command and control as well as military and financial obligations. In particular, they suggest that a third command be established in Nato, alongside Saclant and Saceur (Supreme Allied Commander in Europe), to be called something like Power Projection Command, and headed by a European, to encourage Europe to modernise and build up its forces along the lines of America's global reach.

"Many Americans will be dismayed that this emphasis on partnership forsakes US unilateral leadership," the Rand study concedes. "But many Europeans will find the challenge to be too much too soon for a Europe still searching for its own identity. And many Asians will worry, unnecessarily, that a new Atlantic compact might be directed against them." (They can say that again!)

THE book-length study was edited by David Gompert, former senior director for European and Eurasian affairs at the National Security Council, and Stephen Larrabee, former NSC director on Soviet and east European affairs. The proposal for the new Nato command comes from Dr James Thomson, Rand's president, who ran the Nato desk in President Reagan's White House. The call for an Atlantic free trade agenda comes from Greg Treverton, who was vice-chairman of the National Intelligence Council in Clinton's first term.

The only European on the team was a former British MP, John Roper, who also ran the European Union's Institute for Security Studies. He warns that Europe's political will may not be up to the challenge, and that some Europeans are likely to perceive a subtle Anglo-Saxon ploy "to undermine the process of European integration".

"The practicalities of politics can change fast, just by getting the idea out. And we have seen a marked change among European colleagues just in the year or so we have been putting this together," Gompert told me last week. He also noted that European minds had been concentrated wonderfully by the very narrow margin of Clinton's decision to send US troops into Bosnia, at a time when the Nato alliance was literally hanging in the balance.

"Why would the Europeans go for this, when the current situation is so favourable for them? After all, we bear the bulk of the risks and the burden for defending our common interests," Gompert went on. "The point is, this can't last. US public and political opinion won't stand for it. Remember, Bosnia was a close call. The crunch in the US could come tomorrow if there's a crisis in the Persian Gulf and the Europeans duck. As an alliance, we are living on borrowed time."

*America And Europe; A Partnership for a New Era, by the Rand Corporation, Cambridge University Press, price £30

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The week that Dolly shook the world

Robin McKie, who broke the cloned sheep story, agrees that human clones are possible but can't see the point

IN NEW YORK, there was talk of little else but Dolly last week. News of the sheep's creation relegated White House rent "scandals" and Wall Street rumours to minor TV items as the city went through a paroxysm of speculation about the consequences of her existence — and the prospect of cloning other animals, particularly humans.

"What would you say to your shrink?" wondered playwright Wendy Wasserstein. "I hate my parents? I *am* my own parent!" Some foresaw a business boom, with lawyers envisaging the day when couples would divorce each other for their partner's younger clones, for example.

Another lawyer, Raoul Felder, worried that OJ Simpson might clone himself. "Then he could say, 'It wasn't me; it was the other OJ'." Even worse was the fear that Donald Trump, having cloned his own towers all round the Manhattan skyline, might develop an urge to start replicating himself.

Such reactions, trivial but witty, are typical of the city, and provide a perfect encapsulation of the world's response to Dolly's creation: fascination, fear and wonder.

"Humans use humour as a device to reckon with the unthinkable," said Ellen Futter, president of the American Museum of Natural History. "This is an extraordinary scientific advance that has potentially horrible implications for human society and the natural world at large. It is too big to get your mind around except by faux humour."

Underneath, however, deep concerns about immortality and identity reverberate. People are more worried than amused. And their alarm has spread very quickly. News of scientific discoveries used to take months to filter out. But not any more.

The Observer broke the story on Sunday last week. The next day, President Bill Clinton was demanding that his National Bioethics Advisory Panel review the ethical implications. On Tuesday, Nobel Prize-winning British physicist Joseph Rotblatt was warning on the BBC of the dangers of these "dreadful developments", and there were calls for debate in the House of Lords. Wednesday's Wall Street Journal reported that Hollywood was dusting off scripts about cloning, and by Thursday, the European Union had announced it was holding its own inquiry, with Chinese scientists following suit on Friday.



Hello Dolly . . . the world's most photographed sheep faces the cameras PHOTOGRAPH: MURDO MacLEOD

In addition, within hours of the Observer's story being published, pages bursting with material about clones were being set up on web sites across the Internet, ready for global consumption.

This frantically accelerating news accumulation only helped to engender panic. As the story moved around the world, each alarmist reaction — initially muted — was replaced with a more intense, and worrying piece of speculation. Without time for careful appraisal and rebuttal, each assertion went unchallenged, so that an event which began life by raising a few worries over its human implications came back to haunt Britain in the form of the Daily Mail's Friday splash headline: "Could we now raise the dead?"

Well, we couldn't. It's as simple as that. Recreate the dead — well, theoretically, one day, in a few special circumstances. But raise it? Don't you believe it.

Nor was this the only piece of misguided prophecy on offer. We were told that scientists might soon create thousands of clones of a mad dictator, while others predicted a future populated with human replicants worthy of the science fiction film Blade Runner as well as customised animal clones, including "six-legged chickens", as Philip Vasseur, the French farm minister, somewhat dottily put it.

Such ideas woefully misinterpret the achievements of Ian Wilmut and his colleagues at the Roslin Institute, near Edinburgh. "You cannot blame the scientists for making these discoveries," Dr Wilmut complained. "We are not Frankenstein-type people."

It is therefore important to examine exactly what was involved in the Roslin breakthrough, a success that was in fact based on a very simple process, one that allowed the institute's scientists to turn off the genetic mechanisms that control cell division. This achievement made it possible for them to remove the nucleus of an egg taken from a ewe and effectively replace it with the nucleus of a different cell, one taken from the udder of another adult sheep.

It was this cell that eventually grew up into the fleece, flesh and bones of Dolly. (In fact, the world's famous sheep was originally known as Tuppence. It was only relatively late in her adolescence that the Roslin researchers decided to name her in honour of Dolly Parton.)

The first, and most crucial point about this technology is that each cell removed for cloning requires a human egg to act as a vehicle for its implantation in a host mother. A thousand clones would require the gathering of a thousand human eggs. Yet such eggs are a precious commodity, one certainly not available in the numbers required to create the monstrous scenarios being devised last week.

In addition, this nightmare vision faces an even more serious constraint: a supply of surrogate mothers in whose wombs these teeming clones would be nurtured. To make hundreds of human clones, you have to assume the acquiescence of hundreds of women eager to rent out their wombs for political or commercial profit, a scarcely credible notion.

And why would someone wish to clone himself or herself in vast numbers in the first place? It is a point stressed by Fred Sanger, the British geneticist who won two Nobel prizes for his ground-breaking work on protein and DNA analysis: "I don't see any need to panic. It is possible that we may one day be able to clone a human being, but I can't think why we would want to. I suppose a megalomaniac might try it, but that is extremely unlikely. It would just create more competition for him."

On the other hand, there are enough historical precedents to show that although such widespread biological subservience is very unlikely, it is not totally impossible.

As for individual acts of single cloning, as opposed to the creation of massed ranks of replicants, that is a real prospect. Hence those startled reactions from scientists on hearing the news about the making of Dolly.

"It was absolutely shocking," said Lee Silver, a biologist at Princeton University. "Until Dolly came along, it was an axiom that mammals needed a mother and a father to reproduce. That is no longer true. And what is true of sheep will soon be true for humans."

However, it is not the prospect of governments misusing this technology that worries scientists such as Professor Silver; it is its exploitation by individuals that causes unease. "There are hundreds of private IVF clinics in America, where doctors and technicians are capable of carrying out the relatively complex task of artificially inseminating donated human eggs," Professor Silver says. "Cloning would be no problem to such people."

Gay women wishing to have children without any male involvement; couples in which one partner is totally sterile and who wish to have a child of their own genotype; and parents wishing to copy a beloved dead son or daughter — in each case, cloning fulfils a need, and that provides motivation. We must therefore conclude that human cloning is inevitable, though the timetable remains vague.

But replication is very different from resurrection, as the Daily Mail failed to realise. Identical twins are clones, but frequently act in highly dissimilar ways and have separate conscious individualities. We don't fear twins, and we should not worry about the odd clone or two either, a point stressed by Ken Follett, whose latest best-seller, The Third Twin, hinges on the discovery of a human cloning conspiracy.

"Any cloned person would have a parent to love and raise him," he says. "It would be like having identical twins who are not of the same age — they would not be identical in personality, only similar. It wouldn't be another Ken Follett if you cloned me."

In fact, the main consequence of the Roslin work will affect the world of agriculture, not human society. Cloning animals is a powerful means for standardising products, in this case animals. We have rows of identical vegetables and fruit in our supermarkets, and these are usually clones. So why not animals?

IN ADDITION, when human genes are inserted into animals — an awkward, uncertain business — those few creatures which actually respond to such invasion, and which produce anti-blood clotting factors and other drugs in their milk, can now be reproduced easily.

It was precisely this, potentially lucrative, motive that propelled the Roslin work. In the United States, biotechnological research has been big business for two decades. By contrast, Britain has taken little interest in biology's commercial prospects until fairly recently.

Hence Dolly, an animal that was created — not out of intellectual curiosity, but hard financial interest. In such a setting, ethics tend to come second-best. And, given that government money for Roslin will soon dry up, leaving its scientists entirely dependent on private funding, such trends will only intensify.

Researchers throughout the world are now becoming locked into a network of biotechnological endeavours; genetically engineered pigs that can be used as donors for human organ transplants; factories for growing human skin; and farm animals that can be milked for their medicines.

As Ralph Munson, an ethicist at the University of Missouri in St Louis, put it: "We believe in our society that financial reasons justify much of our research, particularly if it doesn't involve humans."

In general, that research goes ahead in its own little world, unnoticed by most scientists or the public — until it comes up with something shocking, like a clone of an adult sheep. Then the world goes through a ferment of ethical anguish — as it did last week. — *The Observer*

Oregon scientists clone monkeys

OREGON genetic scientists have produced advanced primates from cloned embryos in the form of two healthy monkeys now seven months old — an achievement closer to producing humans than the cloning of Dolly, *writes Martin Walker in Washington*.

"It demands that we take seriously the issue of human cloning," said Professor Arthur Caplan, a bioethisist at the University of Pennsylvania, adding that experimentation with people was still far off. However, he added that the public outcry over human cloning means that "you're probably heading down the path to criminal arrest, not the Nobel prize, if you try this in people".

The research team at the Oregon primate research centre was led by Dr Don Wolf, who also heads human in vitro fertilisation at Oregon's Health Sciences University. "This is really an effort to see if we can create genetically identical monkeys for research," Dr Wolf said, adding his team had no plans to move towards human cloning.

But the cloning of monkeys, genetically far closer to humans than sheep, raises acute philosophical issues.

The Oregon research differs from Dr Wilmut's work in that the monkeys were cloned from embryos, not another adult mammal. While Dolly is the identical twin of the sheep from whom she was cloned, the Oregon monkeys were cloned from eggs taken from another monkey, which were then fertilised using the familiar in vitro method.

Unlike Dolly the sheep, the monkeys are not genetically identical with any living mammal. Moreover, since they came from separate eggs, the monkeys are brother and sister, not identical twins.

But Dr Wolf confirmed that theoretically the process developed could be used to create genetically identical monkeys.

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The Week in Britain James Lewis

City shows it means business over Europe

THE GOVERNMENT'S ambivalent stance towards Europe, the cause of a widening rift in ministerial ranks, also threatens to alienate the Conservatives' traditional supporters in business and industry.

Adair Turner, director-general of the Confederation of British Industry, warned that if Britain stayed out of economic and monetary union "amid triumphalist assertions of our superiority and against a background of wider Europhobia, rubbing our hands with glee at Europe's problems, we could risk isolation". British views would go unheeded, the UK's influence would diminish, and ultimately its access to the single market could be at risk, to its enormous economic disadvantage.

Sir Richard Evans, the chief executive of British Aerospace (BAe), also warned of the "dire" consequences of isolationism, particularly for the stability of currencies. His direct attack on the Prime Minister for failing to keep Tory Eurosceptics in check, was the more remarkable coming from the head of a company which traditionally steers clear of domestic politics, not least because of its heavy reliance on government defence contracts.

Sir Richard and Mr Turner — echoing similar warnings voiced by leaders of other industrial giants such as Unilever and Toyota — were not saying whether they favoured Britain being in the first tranche of monetary union in 1999. Their primary concern was over the Government's drift towards Euroscepticism and the danger that the general election victor — whether the Conservative or Labour party — may have too small a majority to control the "crazy fringe" of sceptics in either party.

THE CABINET'S "wait-and-see" formula for monetary union is such a fudge that ministers keep getting it wrong. That, at least, was the charitable explanation for a categorical assertion by the Health Secretary, Stephen Dorrell, that a Tory government would not be joining the single currency on January 1, 1999. He climbed down hours later, saying that he agreed with the Government's position.

Europe is but one cause of Tory divisions. Another simmering feud is that between unreconstructed Thatcherites and those suspected of playing a part, however small, in the former Prime Minister's downfall. This surfaced in a Spectator book review by the former party chairman, Lord Tebbit, which turned into a venomous personal attack on the Deputy Prime Minister, Michael Heseltine.

Mr Heseltine's conduct had often been "tasteless, tacky if not dishonourable, and self-centred beyond even the call of his profession", declared Lord Tebbit. At the root of his hostility to Mrs Thatcher was "a macho streak which sees only a subservient role for women, however talented, and resentment that a woman achieved the supreme office which he coveted and which was denied him".

The tirade hit the newspaper headlines on the day the Tories lost the Wirral South byelection and just as the beleaguered party chairman, Brian Mawhinney, was emphasising the importance of party unity.

THE British army's court martial system for dealing with offences by military personnel was ruled by the European Court of Human Rights to be in violation of the European Convention on Human Rights, which guarantees the right to trial before an independent and impartial tribunal.

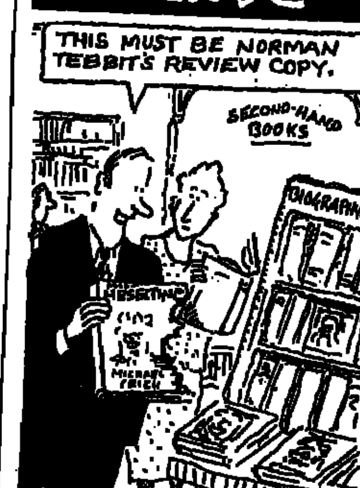
The Strasbourg judges' criticism centred on the role of the convening officer of a court martial, a major-general, who not only decides the charges to be brought but appoints the prosecuting officer and the adjudicating members of the court, who are subordinate officers in units commanded by him.

This ruling on a military system that has been in force for 600 years followed a judgment in the case of ex-Lance Sergeant Alex Findlay, of the Scots Guards, who had been sentenced to two years in prison for threatening to shoot himself and a number of colleagues while serving in Northern Ireland in 1990. He claimed that the court martial failed to allow for the fact that he was suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder after the Falklands war.

DIANE BLOOD has won another battle in her campaign to bear the child of her dead husband, Stephen, from whom sperm was taken while he was in a coma and unable to sign a consent form.

The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority last year banned her from receiving fertility treatment in Britain but, after being ordered by the Court of Appeal to reconsider its decision, relented and allowed her to take the sperm to a fertility clinic in Brussels. Even there, however, treatment will still require approval by a Belgian clinical and ethics committee.

DIANA, Princess of Wales, won a reputed £75,000 in libel damages — the largest such award to a member of the royal family — from the Express on Sunday after the paper admitted it was hoaxed into claiming that she would profit by more than £1 million from the charity auction of several of her designer evening gowns. She said she would pass all of the award to charities.




Time memorial . . . A 180 million-year-old ammonite fossil found near Lyme Regis. The South Coast town, which has been a haunt of collectors since the 19th century, is now considering a plan to introduce a licensing system for those who want to chip away at its cliffs in search of fossils PHOTOGRAPH: MARC HILL

Elite universities get funds boost

Donald MacLeod

OXFORD, Cambridge and other élite universities last week secured big increases in government funding, accelerating the shift towards a premier league of research institutions.

And for the losers in this year's allocations of £3.4 billion from the Higher Education Funding Council for England, there was a warning that next year would be even worse.

Vice-chancellors said the money was "grossly inadequate". Clearly concerned about the prospect of a wave of redundancies in some universities, the Association of University Teachers warned against precipitate action in cash-hit institutions.

Funds were distributed on the basis of the latest assessments of the quality of research by staff, as well as student numbers. Former polytechnics with few resources for research were unable to compete with established centres of excellence. Now academics in new universities are being advised to collaborate with researchers in universities with higher ratings.

Oxford university gained a 7 per cent increase and will receive more than £83 million in the next academic year. University College London, Imperial College, the London School of Economics, Cranfield and Sheffield secured large rises. Cambridge will receive £81.6 million, a 4 per cent rise.

Bath university, which broke into the top 10 in the research ratings for the first time, increased its funding by 7 per cent, more than double the average of 2.8 per cent. The largest leap (36 per cent) was made by Homerton teacher training college in Cambridge.

With student numbers and tuition fees frozen by the Government, the competition for research funds has intensified. The National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education said that the freeze on fees paid by students' local authorities made the financial position worse.

Gains by the leading research universities, known as the Russell Group because their vice-chancellors meet at the Russell Hotel in central London, means their threat to impose top-up fees has receded.

Families of E.coli victims line up to sue ministries

Martin Wainwright

THE Government is facing a "second front" attack on allegedly lax food safety rules, with lawyers, doctors and families of *E.coli* victims launching a pressure group to campaign for tougher laws and potentially massive compensation.

Legal action is expected in an initial 30 cases taken up by the new campaign Hush — Haemolytic Uraemic Syndrome Help — which went public last weekend with a raft of accusations against the health and agriculture ministries.

"For the third time, after salmonella and BSE, we are seeing the same pattern of government behaviour," microbiologist Richard Lacey told an inaugural meeting in Leeds. "Commission advice from the experts, but then ignore it if you don't like the conclusions or they might work out to be too expensive."

Prof Lacey, the scientist at the centre of the BSE furore, has been joined by doctors and researchers in backing Hush.

Cases co-ordinated by a personal injury lawyer Lucy Kennedy, whose firm became involved after the initially bewildering death in 1994 of six-year-old Joanna Nash, threaten large compensation claims.

Prof Lacey said: "One in three of surviving victims suffer long-term kidney damage, so we are talking about the cost of treatment stretching over 30 or more years."

The group's legal argument will rest on alleged government inaction since a report on *E.coli* in 1995, commissioned from Dr Norman Simmons by the health department.

The meeting heard that anxiety had risen as cases of *E.coli* rose from the first example in 1983 to the current total of 1,400. "Norman made it clear that action needed to be taken to tackle *E.coli* in the cattle herds, but no action has been taken since," said Prof Lacey.

The Labour health spokesman John Gunnell, said: "If Labour win the general election, we will set up an independent food safety authority, with teeth to make sure standards are raised."

● John Barr of Wishaw, the butcher at the centre of the *E.coli* food bug in Scotland which has claimed 20 lives over the past three months, resumed business last week. By the end of the first day more than 500 customers had passed through the store.

Beef ban to stay in place

THE Government's new proposals for a phased lifting of the worldwide ban on British beef exports received an unenthusiastic response from the European Commission. Officials said it might take another two months even to consider them, *Stephen Bates reports from Brussels.*

Such a delay would dash any remaining government hopes of securing the prospect of a partial ending of the beef ban before the general election.

Douglas Hogg, the Agriculture Secretary, sent the plans, aimed at ensuring that any beef for export could be guaranteed free of the risk of BSE contamination, to Franz Fischler, the agriculture commissioner, and to Emma Bonino, the commissioner in charge of public health and safety matters.

The letter fulfils the Government's promise to the Ulster Unionists by pointing to the likelihood of Northern Ireland's largely BSE-free herds being among the first to be eligible for export.

It was made clear in Brussels that the British document may not be discussed by the EU's scientific advisory committee until its next scheduled meeting in April.

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Compensation to Gulf war veterans ruled out

David Fairhall and Ewen MacAskill

A NEW row over Gulf war syndrome engulfed the Government last week as the Ministry of Defence infuriated veterans by ruling out compensation for their mysterious illnesses.

The Government's move came after the Armed Forces Minister, Nicholas Soames, dismissed calls for his resignation, despite admitting he had misled MPs over organophosphate chemicals used as pesticides during the conflict. They are believed to be a cause of illness among more than 1,200 veterans.

Mr Soames had apologised to Parliament for misleading it last year, blaming wrong advice from officials, and denied accusations of a cover-up during a highly-charged two-hour grilling by the all-party defence select committee.

Mr Soames had previously agreed to consider paying compensation similar to the £42 million fund paid out to 1,200 haemophiliacs infected with HIV through contaminated blood transfusions. But last week, in evidence to the defence committee, the idea was turned down.

The veterans could still claim war pensions, the MoD's assistant under-secretary, Edgar Buckley, told the committee, but if they wanted more they would have to sue and prove negligence. So far 1,228 veterans have indicated an intention to sue.

Veterans say they have documentary evidence showing that the MoD knew about the use of organophosphates much earlier than it has admitted.

Tony Flint, the regional co-ordinator of the National Gulf Veterans and Families Association, said he was very angry. Compensation was needed for the widows of soldiers who had died, and children born with birth defects, he said. "For the rest of us, what we want is recognition and treatment. I am not optimistic we'll get even that with this government."

The defence committee last week received an MoD memorandum detailing its investigation into how incorrect information came to be supplied to ministers and MPs.

Under persistent questioning, the permanent under-secretary, Sir Richard Mottram, reluctantly identified the Surgeon General's department as being the most likely source of the faulty advice. He said some serving officers and civil servants could face court martial or disciplinary action.

Mr Soames insisted: "I don't believe there has been a cover-up in any sense. There have been very, very serious and fundamental failings in one division of the Ministry of Defence." He had accepted what he had been told, he said.

The defence committee was due to meet this week to finalise its report.

Given the closeness of the election, the Tory members of the committee are unlikely to agree to a report calling for Mr Soames's head, but are almost certain to support Labour in concluding that the MoD's behaviour has been seriously incompetent.

Howard backs abolition of right to elect jury trial

Alan Travis

THE abolition of the historic right to elect to a jury trial for 24,000 defendants a year was last week backed by the Home Secretary, Michael Howard, in order to save £70 million.

Labour welcomed parts of a Home Office package to cut court delays but the shadow home secretary, Jack Straw, opposed the abolition of the right to jury trials, arguing such a decision would increase the backlog of cases waiting to be heard.

Home Office officials admitted that one side-effect of abolishing jury trial in cases which the defendant can elect to be heard in either magistrates or crown courts, such as theft, burglary or some sex offences, could lead to more lenient sentences as magistrates' sentencing powers are more limited than those of crown court judges.

The Home Office believes that such a new law would mean 18,000 of the 24,000 "either way" cases now tried in crown courts would instead be heard by the magistrates.

Mr Howard said he recognised abolition would arouse strong feelings but "those who sought crown court trials without good reason, perhaps simply to delay proceedings, would no longer be able to overrule the magistrates' views".

The proposal forms part of a report of a four-month review by Martin Narey, a Home Office civil servant, into cutting delays in the criminal justice system. Mr Howard also embraced Narey proposals to remove 35,000 defendants a year who are aged 17 from the more lenient juvenile justice system, saying they were "too sophisticated" for youth courts.

Mr Straw committed Labour to opposing the restrictions on jury trials, saying it would make the system less fair. "If a police officer or an MP or even the Home Secretary was charged with an offence of dishonesty would they not insist on being tried by a jury? Why should others be denied this right of election too?"

At the same time new powers to allow the police to shred prosecution evidence in jury trials after only three years were also shelved by Mr Howard in the face of widespread opposition fuelled by the release of the Bridgewater Three.

Mr Howard climbed down in the face of fierce criticism from lawyers, two former home secretaries, Cardinal Basil Hume, the all-party law reform group Justice, and victims of miscarriages of justice.

The new police powers to destroy documents such as those that proved vital to quash the convictions of the Guildford Four were scheduled to come into force in April. They are contained in an obscure code of practice that has never been debated in Parliament and is attached to the Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act 1996, which restricts the volume of documents the police have to disclose.

Two former home secretaries, Lord Jenkins and Lord Rees, and Cardinal Hume had protested to Mr Howard that these "insidious" police powers would have meant that the convictions of the Maguire family and the Guildford Four would never have been quashed. They described the shredding rule as "irresponsible beyond belief".

Written in bronze . . . A monument to Raoul Wallenberg, the Swedish diplomat who saved the lives of tens of thousands of Hungarian Jews during the second world war, was unveiled last week by the Queen at Marble Arch, in central London PHOTOGRAPH: MARTIN ARGLES

More support abortion for women in need

Chris Mihill

ATTITUDES toward abortion in Britain have generally become more liberal over the past 17 years although fewer members of the public now support the idea of aborting a child that may be mentally of physically disabled, according to a survey published last week.

The poll showed 64 per cent of people agreed that abortion should be legally available for all who wanted it, compared with 54 per cent in a similar survey in 1980. The survey, carried out by Mori among 1,943 adults on behalf of the Birth Control Trust and the British Pregnancy Advisory Service, found that nine out of 10 people approved of abortion when the mother's life or health was threatened.

However, approval dropped to 66 per cent if the abortion was because the child would be mentally or physically handicapped. In 1980, 84 per cent of people approved of abortions for such reasons. Only 34 per cent approved of abortion for women who could not afford children.

Eleven per cent of the poll were Roman Catholics, but half of them agreed abortion should be available for all who wanted it.

Asked whether they knew a close friend or a member of the family who had had an abortion, 45 per cent said they did, including 3 per cent who had had one themselves. In 1980, only 27 per cent said they knew someone who had had an abortion.

Bob Worcester, chairman of Mori, said that a 10 per cent increase in approval was a highly significant change.

David Paintin, chairman of the Birth Control Trust, said: "This poll shows that 64 per cent of the public believe abortion should be legally available to all who want it. Those who oppose abortion have received much publicity for their views recently although, as this poll shows, they represent a minority view."

Port deaths lead to record fines

Lawrence Donegan

FOUR companies were fined a total of £1.7 million at the Old Bailey last week after being convicted over the collapse of a ferry walkway at Ramsgate in which six people were killed.

Two Swedish companies responsible for the design and construction of the walkway were fined £1 million, Lloyd's Register of Shipping £500,000 and Port of Ramsgate Ltd £200,000 for breaches of the Health and Safety Act. The previous highest penalty under the legislation was £750,000.

Passing sentence, Mr Justice Clarke said the Swedish companies and Lloyd's Register of Shipping had been guilty of gross negligence. "The purpose of these fines is in part to bring it home to the boardrooms of companies and the controlling minds of other entities that safety of the public is paramount," he said.

Two Britons, lorry driver Steven Jones, aged 34, from Manchester, and Jason Dudley, aged 42, of Epping, were among the six who died in September 1994 when a steel pin holding the walkway in place at the Kent port came loose as passengers were boarding a ferry to Ostend. The other victims were two French tourists, one Belgian and an Italian.

Port of Ramsgate, operator of the walkway, and the Swedish firms denied failing to ensure the safety of passengers, but were found guilty after a four-week trial last month.

Lloyd's Register of Shipping, which gave the walkway a safety certificate, had pleaded guilty. It was the first time in its 237-year history that it had faced a criminal charge.

Celebrities on hit list

CELEBRITIES and politicians, including Vanessa Redgrave and Anna Ford, are being threatened by a violent neo-Nazi group, it was revealed last week, *Kate Watson-Smyth reports.*

Scotland Yard has advised both women on personal security after they received threats from Combat 18. Ms Ford is understood to have contacted police after the walls of her home were recently daubed with National Front symbols.

Detectives have tapped the telephones of a number of public figures who have received death threats. One was told: "This is C18. We're coming to get you."

Last month Combat 18, which was formed in 1992 and takes its name from Adolf Hitler's initials, the first and eighth letters of the alphabet, was linked to a Danish-based letter bomb campaign aimed at British sports stars in mixed marriages.

Among others who have received advice about personal security from Special Branch are the computer magnate Alan Sugar, the television presenter Denis Norden, and the writer Bernard Levin, as well as Barbara Mills, Director of Public Prosecutions, and MPs Paddy Ashdown, Peter Hain, Kate Hoey and Gerry Steinberg.

Broadmoor security to be reviewed

Luke Harding

AN URGENT review of security at Broadmoor special hospital has been ordered by Stephen Dorrell, the Health Secretary, in response to claims that the institution's "patient power" system is running out of control.

The review, which follows claims that staff and a seven-year-old girl have been attacked, will examine security, care, and the role of Broadmoor's patients' council.

The council, which allows patients to air grievances with management, was set up four years ago after Sir Louis Blom-Cooper's report into another special hospital, Ashworth on Merseyside. Sir Louis discovered evidence that patients had been systematically brutalised by nursing staff, but their complaints were seldom believed.

The Broadmoor review was welcomed by the Prison Officers' Association, which has already sent a dossier of complaints to the Health Secretary about staffing levels.

The review will be carried out by the Oxford and Anglia health service by the end of the month.

Attacking "misguided liberalism", Mr Dorrell said: "Serious concerns have been raised. The management believe they have been answered, but I think given proper public concern about these hospitals, it is important that there is an external evaluation. We must not allow fashionable ideas to compromise security."

The hospital, near Crowthorne, Berkshire, houses some of the country's most dangerous criminals, including Peter Sutcliffe, the Yorkshire Ripper.

According to the Mail on Sunday, security at the hospital is at breaking point. A former Broadmoor employee gave sexual favours to a patient and drugs have been seized inside the hospital, the paper claimed.

But a spokeswoman for the Department of Health said managers had already introduced measures to prevent security being compromised.

A full-scale inquiry into Ashworth was launched earlier this year following claims of paedophile activity inside the special hospital's personality disorder unit. Four members of staff remain suspended.

The Prison Officers' Association claim patients at Broadmoor are intimidating staff and said there were too few experienced nurses.

Amnesty calls for ban on shock batons

David Pallister

AMNESTY International this week called for a worldwide suspension of electric shock equipment used in more than 50 countries as instruments of torture.

The organisation also urged the Government to set up an inquiry into the safety of electric prods, shields and belts, some of which are being advertised as delivering a potential lethal shock of up to 300,000 volts.

Brian Wood, the author of the report, Arming The Torturers, told a press conference: "This trade is getting out of control." Electric technologies had "gone beyond the threshold of what is legitimate".

The equipment was being made in Taiwan, China, Germany, France, South Africa and Israel. There were also companies in Britain which offered to supply through third countries, thereby circumventing UK law.

In a separate report, Made In Britain, Amnesty called for a tightening of Britain's export licensing regime to close the loophole of companies acting as third party agents.

Both reports highlight British involvement, exposed two years ago in a Channel 4 Dispatches programme. Representatives of three companies, including Royal Ordnance, were shown offering to supply electric batons to regimes that practise torture.

Mr Wood quotes from a Saudi suspected of being an Iraqi spy during the Gulf war. "The secret police handcuffed me and put legcuffs around my ankles. A bar was put between my legs. Then they started beating me up with electronic sticks. For many hours they tortured me on the soles of my feet. I lost control of everything. I lost control of my bowels, my water."

The Crown Prosecution Service spokesman said that police reports that followed the programme were still under consideration.

Fiona Weir, campaigns director, said Amnesty would be monitoring the main parties' policies on arms control in the run-up to the general election. There had been no detailed response to the Department of Trade and Industry's consultation process, which had been set up after the Scott report on arms to Iraq.

Amnesty has been encouraged by a Labour pledge to ban both the selling and procuring shock batons as well as a promise not to sell arms to regimes that might use them for internal repression.



The madness of St George (et al)

SKETCH
Simon Hoggart

THE Americans have a saying: "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." The Government has a variant: "If it ain't broke, whop it with a sledgehammer till it is." Hence their plans to sell the London Underground.

The Government's plans for the Tube are extraordinary. They are proposing to sell it off for a twentieth of its worth, then hand the money back as investment.

Suppose you went into an estate agent and they said, "Well, this house is probably worth around 200 grand, so we'll sell it to you for £10,000, give you the money back for repairs, and toss in another 10 K for the survey." You'd think they were bonkers. Yet this is what passes for common sense in the crazed world of the Tory Cabinet.

Not that it's likely. It would be ludicrous to compare John Major to Hitler, but one is inevitably reminded of the Führer ordering imaginary divisions across Europe as the Russians reach the outskirts of Berlin. "You, Marshal Portillo, you must privatise the armed forces!" "Yes, My Leader!"

"And you, Interior Minister Howard, I demand a curfew on all unemployed people, enforced by computer tagging! Uberkommandant Dorrell, I must have longer hospital waiting lists!"

"But, my Leader, these are now over one million for the first time in history."

"Aieee! Do not argue with your Leader! I want them longer. You must sack more nurses and appoint administrators, giving each a new Ford Probe incorporating four-channel in-car stereo!"

"Jawohl!" The ministers withdraw, and out of earshot mutter fearfully about which of them will have to bring him the news that the election is lost and that the enemy is a mile from Downing Street. In the cellars below the lifeless body of Sir Edward Heath hangs from a piano wire noose. Suddenly two shots ring out . . .

For this reason, the Labour party did not take Sir George Young's statements very seriously. In fact they tittered and sniggered, especially at his line "We also intend to start the process of appointing advisers". "That's another 10 million," someone shouted. (But this was a wild underestimate. Consultants for the rail sell-off cost £450 million.)

Police caught in Yardie 'squeal deal' scandal

Nick Davies

POLICE and immigration officers have allowed dangerous foreign gangsters to stay illegally in the United Kingdom in order to persuade them to become informers. In some cases, the criminals have gone on to commit serious crimes against British citizens, including rape, robbery and murder.

A detailed investigation by the Guardian with Granada TV's World In Action has revealed the unofficial "squeal deals" policy, which has allowed a series of violent Jamaican Yardie gangsters to dodge immigration barriers.

For a decade, Scotland Yard has recognised the special threat posed by the Yardies, who dominate the global sale of crack cocaine and engage in ferocious violence.

Scotland Yard's response has been so muddled that an internal report speaks of "an almost complete breakdown" in its operation against the Yardies. High-grade intelligence has been squandered and several specialist officers have resigned in protest at the confusion.

Some of those involved started to bend the law by promoting the secret "squeal deals", with disastrous results. In one case, a Yardie who arrived on a six-month visa stayed for 10 years working as Scotland Yard's informer until he was caught on a security video committing an armed robbery.

The "squeal deals" policy has been confirmed by immigration officers and by Detective Superintendent John Jones, who previously led one of the few successful police operations against the Yardies.

Yard duped, page 20

In Brief

THE prison population in England and Wales surged to a record 58,802 inmates as a newly purchased prison ship set sail from New York. But the decision to declare the jails full and start housing inmates in police cells has been postponed.

MICHAEL HOWARD, the Home Secretary, has moved to impose court orders on parents whose children are guilty only of the danger they might commit crimes. And Jack Straw, the shadow home secretary, has declared that children as young as 10 will no longer be exempt from prosecution. At present children under 13 are presumed to be unable to tell right from wrong.

THE Bishop of Birmingham, the Right Reverend Mark Santer, is to marry a divorced mother of three in an unprecedented ceremony at a register office later this year.

DAVID WILMOT, the head of Greater Manchester police, became the first chief constable to defy his own professional body when he rejected a compulsory register of freemasons.

THE BBC admitted it blundered over the position of presenter Ben Bradshaw, who was on effective paid leave for five months after being adopted as a Labour candidate for the marginal seat of Exeter.

BRENDA DAVIES, the teacher who allowed a pupil to smack a group of alleged bullies, has resigned and will take her case to an industrial tribunal.

TORIES in Reigate have chosen Crispin Blunt as their candidate in place of the ousted MP Sir George Gardiner.

SION JENKINS, the foster father of the murdered teenager Billie-Jo Jenkins, was released on bail after 36 hours of questioning.

A BAG containing $2.5 million in cash, part of a US aid package to Russia, was stolen from a strongroom at Heathrow.

MARK WESTON, who was cleared of murdering Vikki Thompson in a Cotswold village, has been granted legal aid to sue the police for wrongful arrest and prosecution. He spent 10 months in jail awaiting trial before his acquittal in December.

OSCAR LEWENSTEIN, impresario of film, theatre and television, has died aged 80. He was a vital part of the Royal Court theatre in Sloane Square.

HORACE CUTLER, the leader of the Greater London Council and a flamboyant figure in London politics for more than 30 years, has died aged 84.

Albania's losing gamble

THE ALBANIAN lottery has thrown the dice in a disarray that now threatens the surrounding region as well as undermining what remains of the country's own cohesion. This result was as predictable as the collapse of the financial pyramid schemes that led to the present crisis. Violence has been worst in the southern towns, where the schemes were most popular. The shift back to despotic rule was also presaged not only in last year's rigged elections but in the experience of earlier history. The anti-communist president, Sali Berisha, who was re-elected on Monday by his own packed parliament, now rules by means just about as democratic as those of the former president, Enver Hoxha.

A nation that emerged so suddenly from decades of peculiar repression was always going to find the transition a difficult one. The mixture of Stalinism flavoured with Maoism and clothed in the fierce nationalism of Europe's poorest country was poisonous enough. The false expectations of a new capitalist dawn only made it more deadly. The pyramid schemes were not, at their outset, wholly fantastic, and primed as they were with cash from drugs, organised crime and sanction-busting into Serbia, they did result in a primitive form of redistribution. Many of those who took part knew it was a desperate gamble — except for the government ministers who promoted them in order to recoup their expenses for the elections that they rigged last year. But if it was an illusion, then the Albanians have been accustomed to living in an illusory world.

Berisha has been treated mildly by the European nations and the United States for a mixture of reasons. He has escaped censure partly because he avoided inflaming the spirit of pan-Albanian nationalism that might easily cause insurrection in the Serbian region of Kosovo and among the Albanian minority in Macedonia. But he has also been treated indulgently because of his anti-communist credentials. The result is that his parliament — from which the bulk of the ex-communist Socialists are excluded — has no power to mediate the present crisis. Instead, it spent Monday in a meaningless exercise, protected by armed police, to "re-elect" Berisha for another five-year term.

The protest leaders in Vlore were showing restraint by urging their followers to stay at home on Tuesday and not risk more violence. But it would be unrealistic to suppose this can last: Albanian political tradition has little experience of the middle ground between conformity and violence. Berisha's allegations about armed communist rebels — helped by foreign espionage services — may be absurd, but an internal rebellion is now a real possibility. Foreign pressure must be brought to bear upon the president to accept the reality: his government does not control half of the country, and to pretend otherwise is suicidal. A coalition including the opposition is the only chance of defusing the risk of civil war.

Setting facts in concrete

JERUSALEM has been destroyed and rebuilt 17 times during its existence. Building may alter history, but history also alters buildings, tearing them down, raising them up, and handing them on to new tenants. This is a fact which ought to give pause to the Israelis, those modern creators of facts on the ground. Their latest effort to encase politics in concrete and steel came last week with Binyamin Netanyahu's approval of a scheme to build 6,500 Jewish homes at Har Homa, due south of the city proper. Har Homa will form the last link in the chain of Jewish settlements around Greater Jerusalem. It cuts the only remaining corridor connecting Arabs in the city with those outside, and is designed to make it impossible for the Palestinians to have a capital in the eastern part of Jerusalem.

Netanyahu may have paid an unusual price for Har Homa. Some reports suggest he has promised Yasser Arafat that, in return for Palestinian restraint on Har Homa, Israel will hand over a much larger portion of the West Bank in the next withdrawal from occupied territory than had previously been offered. If this is true, it is a manoeuvre full of dangers for both sides, particularly for Arafat, who could be charged with giving up Jerusalem.

It was Yitzhak Rabin who first approved Har Homa. Shimon Perez did not differ from him on this matter, and Netanyahu can say that he is only carrying out a policy laid down by his Labour predecessors. However, Rabin and Peres postponed the project because they knew how explosive it would be. The policy, whether Labour or Likud, has been to surround the huge Greater Jerusalem area with two concentric circles of settlements and military roads and positions. Inside these ramparts is 10 per cent of the area of the West Bank and up to half of the Israeli settlers in the territory. It is clear, therefore, that the policy prejudices not only the negotiations on the future of Jerusalem but those on a final settlement for the West Bank as a whole.

The Israeli prime minister returned from a recent visit to the United States to find the country full of rumours that he had agreed to give up the project while in Washington. Already under pressure because of the Hebron redeployment and because of a scandal over a ministerial appointment, he may have pleaded that he had to go ahead or lose control of his supporters. He could, in the immediate tactical sense, have a point. But, as before, he is tiptoeing along the edge of the abyss, risking bloodshed and worse.

It is true that one particular building site is not the issue. The engineering of Jerusalem to alter the demographic balance, incorporate a large section of the West Bank, and isolate the Palestinian population of the city has been going on for 30 years. It began within days of the 1967 victory and has involved the confiscation of a third of the territory of East Jerusalem. It is even now being pursued on another front by the systematic withdrawal of residence permits, on flimsy grounds, a policy that will result in a further fall in the Palestinian population of the city. It will have to be at least partially reversed if there is ever to be a just final settlement. Israeli ministers might reflect that houses have no control over who lives in them. Palestinians could as well sit in those flats and stare down from those commanding heights as Israelis. Or Israelis might have to live there with a Palestinian policeman on the street. Or both might live there — if the day ever comes when, as the Palestinian leader Faisal Husseini once put it, "our Jerusalem" means a Jerusalem that belongs to both Jews and Arabs.

A red card for the referee?

TECHNOLOGY created the problem but cannot solve it. The problem is what to do when a referee makes a genuine mistake — as Mike Reed appeared to have done in last week's Chelsea v Leicester FA Cup tie — which critically affects the result but which could have been avoided by consulting a video re-run. It was created by technology because it is only courtesy of countless video re-runs from all sorts of angles — which a referee's instant decision can't possibly take into account — that there is any controversy at all. But once the principle of video re-runs is conceded there will be no end to it, and the free-flowing spontaneity that is the essence of a football match will be shattered. It is bad enough when play is interrupted by substitutions — a device sometimes used to interrupt the opponents' rhythm — but if the game had to stop for a few minutes every time there was a controversial decision it would become a different game. If people want to watch punctuated American football they have every opportunity to do so. But football is football.

This is not to say that there is no place for digital techniques. Where it is a question of deciding whether a ball has gone over a straight line there are techniques used in tennis and rugby league that could be applied to football. There are also ways of using technology to judge instantaneously whether a player is offside. But when it comes to something requiring judgment — such as whether a collision in the penalty area is a foul or an accident, as in last week's game — it has to be left to a human being or else the game will mutate into a series of stop-go episodes, driving spectators away without the certainty of getting an agreed decision. The fallibility of referees is part of the game's human frailty. It comes with the pitch. Like them or hate them, we definitely need them.

Break for the border – before it closes

Martin Woollacott

SCUM Of The Earth was the title Arthur Koestler gave to his account of his escape from France in 1940. That was how it felt to be on the run in the harassed and deranged France of those days, where hatred of the foreigner — "whether he was an Italian navvy, a Polish miner, or a German refugee" — was, Koestler wrote, the only spontaneous feeling left.

The government represented itself as "engaged in a heroic fight against the dragon called *sale métèque* (dirty wog)". Wedged in the back of a police van on his way to detention in Paris, Koestler reflected that you may go on as long as you want about xenophobia but "as long as you haven't smelled a policeman's perspiration two inches from your nose you don't know what it's all about".

It is not surprising that the battles being fought over immigration and asylum in European countries reach back for metaphors from those times. Immigration is the single most important issue used by parties of the far right, while measures of immigration control can bear a painful similarity to those used to round up Jews and other enemies in Nazi Europe.

In France, these unhappy reverberations have become louder with each National Front victory. The most recent, at Vitrolles, transformed what might have been no more than an uneasy exchange over a bill bringing in new measures to control illegal immigration into a real debate over the way in which the mainstream political agenda has been infected by the National Front. The prime minister, Alain Juppé, began a defence of his position with a specific reference to the shadows of the past and a plea that critics should avoid unfair parallels between practical, necessary legislation and Vichy laws.

Those who demonstrated against the bill in Paris and other French cities did so not so much because of the plight of migrants but because of their fears about the direction of French society. They went on the streets, Le Monde suggested, simply to let it be known that they find it harder and harder to breathe in today's France.

There is no reason to doubt the liberal instincts of Juppé, who has been uncomfortable with the planned legislation since it first emerged a year ago. But whether the legislation is genuinely practical is doubted by critics who see it mainly as a way of trying to take the immigration issue away from the National Front. Hence the charges of the "Lepénisation" of politics, that, in trying to pre-empt the National Front, that party is instead made respectable because a mild version of its agenda has been taken up by mainstream parties.

What Koestler describes, that societies in trouble tend to scapegoat foreigners and particularly immigrants, makes the business of really dealing with immigration, as opposed to shadow boxing with it for real or imagined political advantage, one of the most difficult tasks. The latest increase in French unemployment figures, now heading toward 13 per cent, points at the real problem underlying both shifting popular attitudes and the manoeuvring of politicians on immigration.

But it is worth looking to the United States to see a situation somewhat less coloured by charges of fascism and racism than that in Europe. A majority of blacks and Hispanics in that country are in favour of controls on immigration, according to a survey quoted by the political writer Michael Lind.

Lind offers an analysis of the rightwing approach to immigration, which suggests that in spite of populists like Pat Buchanan, the right in general encourages immigration because it drives down wages. Lind has further developed his ideas to suggest that the preoccupation with ethnicity in the US, in part a consequence of immigration, is one that business favours because it undermines solidarity among workers.

Lind's idea that immigration is a kind of plot against the workers would appeal to Jean-Marie Le Pen. But it should not be impossible to present immigration as a phenomenon that is neither good nor bad in itself. It ought to be possible to offer an unforced welcome to some while turning others back, in a way devoid of malice or contempt.

Did Europe need the 700,000 illegal immigrants who may, according to what are admittedly the largest estimates, have entered through Italy alone last year? In some European countries some liberals regard any action against any migrants as suspect. Juppé complains that there is no republican policy on illegal immigration, presumably because some in the anti-racist movements cannot bring themselves to attend to the question and some on the extreme right believe all immigration, at least of people of colour, is bad.

ALL OVER Europe rules on legal and illegal immigration and on asylum have been tightened. In Germany, the government now insists that the children of legal immigrants have residence permits and visas, and there have been unseemly efforts to pack Bosnian refugees back "home" even though the situation there is far from settled. In Holland, the tough regime in detention centres has been attacked as deliberately designed to deter asylum-seekers.

There is probably no way to extricate immigration from the general contest over values in societies. But it still needs to be argued that laws can be enacted to deal with real problems rather than to gather votes from those who fear foreigners, and the laws can be used in a racist or vengeful way, or in a fair-minded way. A recent survey of young Europeans found a majority relaxed on questions of race and nationality, but hard on immigrants.

This contradiction between tolerance in private life and intolerance in public life is not easy to accept but it is better than intolerance on both fronts. Koestler escaped from France to Britain, which also put him in jail for a while. He wrote, however, that he would give Pentonville three stars in his list of European prisons because it was the only one in which he had felt safe. There is something there of the distinction of spirit that matters far more than the detail of measures to control migrants and refugees.

Mostar, a city still divided against itself

Rémy Ourdan in Mostar

THE seven brand-new bridges straddling the Neretva river, which divides Muslim east Mostar from Croat west Mostar, are the pride of the European Union officials who financed their reconstruction. The trouble is that nobody uses them.

Each camp has its own army, police, civil service, flag and currency. And the Croat nationalists, who have illegally maintained the existence of their "Herzeg-Bosna" statelet, make a point of blocking any project to reunite the city.

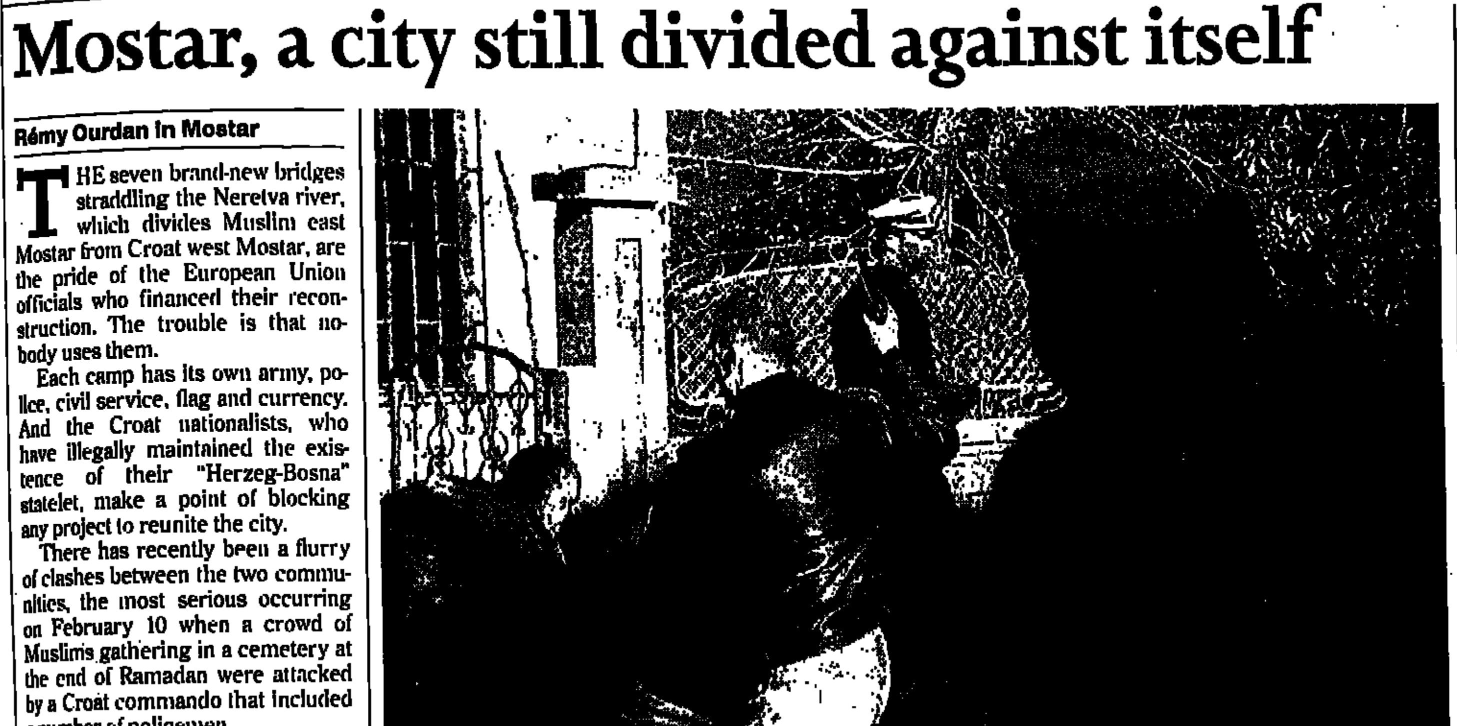
There has recently been a flurry of clashes between the two communities, the most serious occurring on February 10 when a crowd of Muslims gathering in a cemetery at the end of Ramadan were attacked by a Croat commando that included a number of policemen.

They beat the Muslims with iron bars and then opened fire on them, killing one man and wounding 30. The incident was the worst example of the violence that has been escalating for months now. People in both halves of the divided city are being evicted, threatened and prevented from going about their business.

This time the international community was determined to identify those responsible for the attack, and the United Nations set up a commission of inquiry. Its report was expected to be highly sensitive — so much so, speculates a Western officer, that the February 20 rocket attack on a Spanish tank belonging to Nato's Stabilisation Force (S-for) may have been intended as a warning.

Despite the climate of fear and the law of silence imposed by Mostar's various mafias, everyone knows who was responsible for the cemetery attack. The name most frequently mentioned is that of police chief Marko Radic, or "Maka", who distinguished himself during the war first in an crack army unit, then at a notorious detention camp. The commando unit is believed to be been made up of men from his special forces.

But Radic was apparently acting on the orders of the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ), President Franjo Tudjman's party, and high-ranking figures in "Herzeg-Bosna" — in other words people working hand in hand with Zagreb who grew rich on trafficking during the war, and who believe in maintaining ethnic divisions.



Culture clash . . . a plainclothes Croat policeman brandishing a pistol beats a Muslim on February 10 during the most serious incident in recent clashes in Mostar

"They want the country to be divided and Mostar to be the Croats' capital," says Safet Orucevic, head of the Bosnian camp. "They tried to kill Hans Koschnick [Mostar's European "mayor" from 1994 to 1996] just because he wanted to reunite the city. Either they'll have to be removed from the political scene or it'll be a victory for fascism. My enemies are not the Croats, but the fascists, the madmen, the war criminals of Mostar and Zagreb."

Although Orucevic thinks the international community is probably now determined to put pressure on the Croat nationalists, he says he is "fed up with being optimistic" three years into the ceasefire.

Mostar's Croat mayor, Ivica Prskalo, blames Orucevic for the February 10 incident, claiming that "he led the crowd to the cemetery without first notifying me and without any consideration for people's safety". He believes "trust" must be re-established between the communities and has condemned the eviction of Muslim families from west Mostar (which has been going on at a rate of 200 a year).

Prskalo is, however, regarded as a puppet who has been allowed little room for manoeuvre by the ultra-nationalists of HDZ and "Herzeg-Bosna". He denies this, claiming that "the extremists are not in control of the situation". But recently, at a time when he was meeting Orucevic on a regular basis to discuss the reunification of Mostar, his wife's dress shop was blown up. It is widely rumoured that he has received heavy hints that he must remain "a good Croat".

On the Muslim side, Orucevic has fewer problems with the nationalist camp, who have less clout in Sarajevo than their Croat equivalents in Zagreb. "At times of great tension, extremists start getting restless, but I retain my authority. Their influence is naturally reinforced by incidents such as those caused by the Croats. Fortunately our unchallenged leader remains Alija Izetbetgovic, who is fighting for a unified Bosnia." Orucevic remains the main champion of a multi-ethnic Mostar, and gained the largest share of the vote at the last election.

This week, the UN finally published its report on the cemetery incident. It confirmed there was irrefutable proof that Croat police from west Mostar had shot fleeing Muslim civilians in the back.

The UN report names five policemen, who were identified by eyewitnesses and from photographs, and states that the Croat police authorities deliberately lied to the commission of inquiry.

It also called for the dismissal of police chiefs in both west Mostar and east Mostar because of their conduct after the cemetery shooting (Muslims were evicted from their homes by Croats, and Croats beaten up by Muslims).

Western diplomats feel that the fate of the divided city of Mostar is crucial to the future of the peace process in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Chaos in Mostar could spell the demise of the Muslim-Croat Federation and encourage the Serbs of Brcko (a town with provisional status) to refuse negotiations and not allow the return of refugees.

Izetbegovic has accepted the UN's recommendations and is expected to dismiss east Mostar's police chief. But Kresimir Zubak, the Croat member of Bosnia's presidential triumvirate, will make no promises as to the arrest of the policemen named by the UN, a decision that will no doubt increase tension in Mostar.

The UN report has placed the international community in a quandary: what will it do if, as it now appears, the Croats persist in being unco-operative?

(February 23-24 and 27)

Protest over immigration crackdown

Philippe Bernard and Jean-Baptiste de Montvalon in Paris

A POLL commissioned by Le Monde and Radio Classique showed that last Sunday's huge demonstration in Paris to protest against stricter immigration controls was partly prompted by fears of Jean-Marie Le Pen's far-right National Front gaining further ground after its victory at Vitrolles two weeks earlier.

The wave of protest against government immigration policies has, however, had little effect on the Debré bill now in the pipeline. The government has backtracked on only one article of the bill, the one concerning accommodation certificates issued to visiting foreigners bearing a visa.

In the article's original version, anyone putting up a foreign visitor would have been obliged to notify the local town hall when that visitor left. It caused such a chorus of protest that the government proposed an amendment whereby it would be incumbent on the visitor, instead of the host, to notify the police of his or her departure when leaving the country.

But in other respects the bill, which according to its prime mover, the interior minister, Jean-Louis Debré, is aimed at producing "zero illegal immigration", still has plenty of teeth. Police will be authorised to search any vehicle other than private cars within 20km of a border with a country that is a signatory to the Schengen accords (which eased border controls between some European Union nations), if they suspect that it is bringing in illegal immigrants.

They will be able to "withhold" the passports of foreigners in an "irregular" situation, that is if the foreigners concerned have not already divested themselves of their passports, which is the case with 85 per cent of immigrants arrested by police.

The fingerprinting of all non-European foreigners wishing to stay in France — which is the only way of identifying foreigners who have "lost" their identity papers — was proposed by the National Assembly, but the Senate restricted such arrangements to foreigners applying for a residence permit.

The bill grants a one-year residence permit to certain categories of people who can neither have their situation regularised nor be deported, and who are therefore forced to go underground. This measure, designed to deal with illegal immigrants, such as those expelled from Saint-Bernard's Church in Paris last summer, will probably allow about 1,000 foreigners to regularise their situation each year.

But it is far from certain that the stricter controls will have any effect on the phenomenon they are designed to combat. Danièle Lochak, president of Gisti, a group that helps immigrant workers, is only half-joking when she suggests that "the only really effective measure would be to confiscate the passports of all foreigners entering France and fit them with electronic tags".

(February 22 and 26)

The perils of ignoring public anger

EDITORIAL

THE events of last weekend seem to have washed over most French political leaders of both right and left. They may have noticed, but did not seem particularly alarmed, that Catherine Mégret, a member of the far-right National Front (FN) who was recently elected mayor of Vitrolles, told the German paper Berliner Zeitung that "anyone at all sensible will agree that there are differences between races".

Why, they seemed to be saying, should anyone get hot under the collar about the mayor of a town of 39,000 inhabitants making racist remarks?

Those same politicians also seemed unaware of a rare occurrence in Paris over the weekend: in a sudden upsurge of moral and civic outrage, more than 100,000 people took to the streets to demonstrate against stricter immigration controls and shrinking freedoms.

The fact that political leaders on both sides of the ideological divide pretended not to hear or not to understand the demonstrators' message does not augur well for the future.

On the right, it has gradually dawned on politicians that they cannot have it both ways: if the Debré legislation on immigration were to go through parliament unamended, a number of those who took Jacques Chirac at his word when he announced generous-sounding policies during his 1995 presidential campaign would be alienated; and if the bill were to be heavily amended, the FN would waste no time in winning over new swathes of the rightwing electorate.

On the left, the Socialist party leader Lionel Jospin, his eye apparently on the party's ratings, failed to understand that his supporters and voters expected him to do something more than brandish a vaguely formulated petition in Toulouse.

With the notable exception of the former prime minister, Michel Rocard, the Socialist leaders have not realised, either, how damaging their perceived passivity on this issue may be.

As for the authorities' claim that a mere 33,000 marched in Paris, when there were clearly three times that number, it brought back unpleasant memories of a time when official untruths were part and parcel of government announcements.

So nothing much happened in France last weekend — except that on Sunday a ceremony that has been held every year since 1945 took place in Ivry cemetery, on the outskirts of Paris. It commemorated the 23 members of the Resistance's Manouchian-Boczov group who were shot by the Germans at Mont Valérien on February 21, 1944. All 23 were foreigners who died for France, cradle of human rights.

(February 25)

France 'is no longer the land of welcome'

Isabelle Adjani tells **Annick Cojean** why she signed the petition against stricter immigration controls

"DO YOU want to see a picture of my father?" Isabelle Adjani asked. She unrolled a huge photograph of Mohammed Chérif Adjani, revealing a young man with light skin, dark hair, the slight pout of a rebellious teenager, and gentle, almost feminine features.

Mohammed was born in Constantine, a city in the region of Kabylia in Algeria. He was only 16 when he joined Marshal Alphonse Juin's forces and fought the Nazis in Italy, France and, right at the end of the war, in Germany. At the age of 20 he met a blonde young Bavarian, who spoke only German. They decided to get married.

After briefly living in Germany, then in Algeria, and dreaming of emigrating to America, they ended up in a council flat in the Paris suburb of Gennevilliers, where many other immigrants lived. It was there that Isabelle Yasmina Adjani was born.

Mohammed talked very little about Algeria, his parents, Islam or the Arabic language until the end of his life. He worked as a garage mechanic. He was aware of being different and felt vulnerable, so he kept himself to himself. It was a way of protecting his daughter. He was proud that she was French and doing well at school, and wanted her to go to university. Instead she became a star of stage and screen.

Isabelle Adjani has never much liked talking about her origins, childhood or private life. But in 1988 she suddenly decided to go to Algeria for the first time, so as to "fight the conspiracy of silence". She addressed an audience of students, collected evidence from doctors and people who had been tortured, and tried to alert public opinion. But she denied she was getting involved in politics and vigorously refused to become a *pasionaria*.

In 1989, when she went up on stage to collect a César award (the French equivalent of an Oscar) for her performance in the film Camille Claudel, she read out — without comment — an extract from Salman Rushdie's The Satanic Verses.

Adjani is someone who acts on impulse. Although determined to remain a free agent at all times, she will never try to dodge a commitment she regards as vital — such as the present petition against the so-called Debré bill aimed at introducing stricter immigration controls.

She was not involved in getting the campaign started, and has decided not to join any demonstrations. Indeed, she would have preferred not to have to explain why she signed the petition, as she hates putting herself in the public eye. But, having agreed to talk, she does so bluntly.

"I didn't sign the petition because my name is Adjani," she says. "It had nothing to do with it being a well-known name or with my background. I signed it because the bill contains some inadmissible clauses, such as the one requiring anyone who puts up a foreigner — by the way, does the word 'foreigner' include Americans and Canadians, or just Africans and people from the Maghreb? — to notify the authorities. It's an insane incitement to denunciation. It's tantamount to giving everyone a policing task.

"The powder keg is ready to explode. The misguided people who drafted the bill are, quite frankly, playing with fire. They must surely backtrack now they have seen how many and what kind of people signed the petition. Otherwise it'll mean we've moved into a fascist regime without realising it.

"France is no longer the 'land of welcome' it used to be. Its immigration policies have been inconsistent and opportunistic. First there were the Poles in the twenties, then the Italians and the Spanish after the war, with the Portuguese and Algerians taking up the lowest-paid jobs.



Adjani: 'Why doesn't the government realise that the Debré bill is perfect grist to the National Front's mill?' UNIVERSAL PICTORIAL PRESS

"Whenever France needed immigrants to work in its factories or fight its wars, it always managed to accept them, and sometimes even went to get them. But as soon as there was a dip in the economy it suddenly closed its borders. France can no longer describe itself as a country of asylum. Even people who are persecuted in their own countries have no hope of finding refuge here.

"The ideas that made France what it is, a country founded on human rights, are precisely those that people in the National Front (FN) are using as ammunition . . . They are exploiting what we petitioners have called for. They are terribly dangerous and cunning; they know how to upstage everyone by seeming to be honest, reliable guys.

"They say: 'We've had enough of the fantasies and waffle of Chirac, Juppé and the rest of them! We believe in action.' It's all rapped out in clear, simplistic, intelligible language. It's the method used by fundamentalists of every description all over the world.

"They exploit a basic misunderstanding so as to win over all those bewildered, bruised people who are fed up with politicians' broken promises and lack of integrity. As a result, the way is left open for the FN's evil and murderous forces to push closer to power. Can't the government see that its lines of communication with the French have been broken? Why doesn't it realise that the Debré bill is perfect grist to the FN's mill?

"If I was an optimist, I'd say to myself that perhaps this latest government blunder has come at just the right time. Perhaps it's an evil from which some good may come — the French people have responded by strongly supporting the petition."

(February 22)

Gabo's exile saddens Colombia

Anne Proenza in Bogotá

THE Colombian weekly, Cambio 16, has just confirmed a rumour that has been going around for some time: "Gabo", as Colombians affectionately call their Nobel Prize-winning novelist, Gabriel García Márquez, has decided to stop living in his native country.

The weekly announced that the last board meeting of the television news service QAT could not be held in Bogotá because one of its members, García Márquez, had decided not to return to Colombia unless the situation there changed.

When the Colombian radio station RCB questioned him in Mexico City, where he now resides, García Márquez said: "As the situation in Colombia is uncomfortable, unsafe, unstable and not very conducive to writing, I have gone off to a place where I can do what I do best for Colombia: writing."

His decision was received with sadness by the Colombian media and intellectuals. It has political connotations in so far as García Márquez has often criticised the government of Colombia's president, Ernesto Samper.

In January 1996, he went so far as to say: "The president should calm down . . . The way things are going, we won't need a plebiscite to get a civil war." Approached more than once to head an opposition movement and stand for the presidency, García Márquez has consistently refused.

The author of One Hundred Years Of Solitude (20 million copies sold worldwide) has long divided his time between Mexico City and Cartagena, on Colombia's Caribbean coast. In 1981, he took refuge in the Mexican capital when he was accused by Julio César Turbay Ayala's government of having contacts with the guerrillas.

García Márquez travels often, mostly to Paris, where he has two flats, and to Havana — he is a great friend of Fidel Castro — where he is currently renovating a splendid residence on Cathedral Square.

But in order to write his last book but one, Noticia de un Secuestro (Chronicle Of A Hostage-Taking), which is not a novel but a piece of investigative reporting, García Márquez has spent most of his time over the past three years in Colombia, where the media made a habit of asking him for his reactions on a wide range of issues.

Meanwhile as they await his latest work (believed to be a trilogy of short stories), Colombians are sad that "Gabo" will not be attending, as he usually does, the Cartagena International Film Festival, on March 7-15. Nor will he be around to celebrate his 70th birthday on March 6.

His deliberate absence is felt to be a slap in the face. The daily El Tiempo reports that a group of intellectuals and journalists are drafting a petition asking the Nobel Prize winner to go back on his decision.

(February 25)

Three balloons and a lot of hot air

CINEMA
Jean-Michel Frodon

THERE are three colourful hot-air balloons in Bernard-Henri Lévy's first feature, Le Jour et la Nuit (Night And Day), and they make a pretty sight as they glide majestically over a Mexican landscape of breathtaking beauty. Indeed, everything in the film is beautiful — the actresses, the yacht, the large American car, the elegantly seedy hacienda, and the photography, which is of the glossy kind usually found in coffee-table books.

Lévy and his co-scriptwriter, Jean-Paul Enthoven, have really let themselves go, treating us to their ruminations on a variety of subjects from love, literature and revolution to fear of death, fate and the performing arts.

We gather, from explicit references in the film and statements to the media, that Lévy sees himself very much in the mould of Welles, Visconti, Renoir, Huston, Goethe, Aeschylus, Hemingway and Lowry. The poster of the film alludes to Gone With The Wind. And why not? Who can blame a novice film-maker for being ambitious?

Pretty early on, however, one is puzzled by the movie. The first sequence, in which a Junoesque actress and her rascally producer have a row in a car, is supposed to be hilarious but has the opposite effect. The credit titles that follow are much funnier, though that is manifestly not their intention.

The film tells how the actress (Lévy's wife, Arielle Dombasle) and the producer (the satirist Karl Zéro) decide to visit a blasé writer (Alain Delon) in the hope of persuading him to allow his first book, which brought him literary fame, to be adapted for the screen.

The writer wearily allows his young wife (Marianne Denicourt) to have a fling with a youthful vulcanologist (Xavier Beauvois), and then whisper a few "naughty" words in his ear (this is supposed to be a daring movie).

Whenever the vulcanologist has a spare moment, he goes into a huddle with some farm-workers in the kitchen and plots an attack on an evil landowner (Francesco Rabal), who, from time to time, revives his sexual ardour by spanking local girls.

Aloft in his balloon, Delon observes these goings-on through binoculars, while a gay factotum-cum-chorus-leader (Jean-Pierre Kalfon) sums up the action whenever one is in danger of losing the thread. Lauren Bacall repeatedly walks in and out of frame looking as though she has no idea what the heck she is doing in the film.

Members of the audience could no doubt tell her: during the various longueurs in the narrative, they will have worked out the meaning of her presence long before it is revealed in the last reel, supposedly to everyone's amazement.

Composer Maurice Jarre tries to crank the flagging film back into action by swamping the soundtrack with rousing music that sounds like a souped-up version of the score he wrote for Lawrence Of Arabia. It is all quite out of proportion: next to David Lean's Arabia, Le Jour et la Nuit is a sandpit.

The actors try their best as they flail against this whirlwind of metaphor, quotation and artifice. Delon has lost none of his charm. He spends most of the time apparently more remote from the world than he is required to be by the scenario. And it becomes quite clear he has wandered into the wrong film when the plot, misusing his unusual acting talents, forces him to perform tours de force clutching a bottle or in a clinch with Dombasle, the comely incarnation of man's hopes of a second life — the key theme of this Faustian fable.

There is little to say about the other actors, except that it is difficult to see why Denicourt spends so much time wandering around topless, even if she is very easy on the eye. It is equally hard to see why Lévy decides, without the slightest narrative justification, to have a go at such potential directorial minefields as a boxing match or scenes of lovemaking when he manifestly has no idea how to film them.

It consequently occurs to one very early on in proceedings that balloons and movies of this kind, both propelled as they are by hot air, are liable to come a cropper.

(February 15)

Le Monde

Directeur: Jean-Marie Colombani

Museum fights terms of bequest

Erlend Clouston

AN ENORMOUS, panther-like animal snarls on the tie of Julian Spalding. The statement is as much political as fashion. The director of Glasgow Museums is fighting the terms of the will of Sir William Burrell, the shipping magnate who 53 years ago gave Glasgow a stupendous art collection rivalled in its diversity and quality only by the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.

Now Glasgow — as represented by Mr Spalding — is seeking to cancel the attached condition that the council should not lend any of the 8,000 items to overseas institutions.

Mr Spalding insists that all the great international institutions trade with each other. It is a way of whetting the public's appetite and increasing attendances. The Burrell's attendances have dropped from the opening year's 1 million to 300,000.

"I am extending the power of his will rather than changing it," he says with the purposefulness that allegedly drives most of his 380 staff to distraction. "You know," he continues briskly, "he gave a smaller collection to Berwick-on-Tweed, and allowed them to lend all over the world."

To many people in the Scottish arts establishment, this sounds like refined grave-robbing. But the director's sinuous logic uncoils a plausible defence. "The whole spirit of Sir William's will was lending," says Mr Spalding, citing Glasgow's benefactor's willingness to let British museums borrow from the collection.

Julian Spalding, who is challenging the terms of Sir William Burrell's will over the loan of artworks PHOTOGRAPH: MURDO MacLEOD

Unfortunately for Glasgow and its director, Sir William's four trustees do not swallow this. Their objections mean that the city, trying to find large budget cuts, is also facing the extensive legal costs of a special summer parliamentary hearing that will decide whether Glasgow's request is in the public interest.

Mr Spalding is scornful of the trustees' stubbornness. "They are using his money to fight us, which is quite wrong."

He says the city, in a separate action, is to challenge the trustees' right to use the residue of Sir William's estate to defend the legal status quo.

Glasgow has had to turn down "dozens" of requests from institutions wanting to borrow Sir William's medieval tapestries, stained glass and Degas paintings.

"The Burrell gallery is becoming isolated. The result is that people outside Britain are beginning to forget about it," says Mr Spalding.

Notes & Queries Joseph Harker...

***HOW* creative were our forebears in celebrating the first millennium? Did they leave any monuments to it?**

THE YEAR 1000 did not produce much excitement, and there seems to have been virtually no expectation of an end to the world. The mass of the peasantry would have been unaware of it and the country priesthood, singularly ignorant and uninstructed, probably failed to inform them. Such an abstract milestone was far less important than good harvests and the cycle of the seasons. Even among the tiny intelligentsia — the senior clergy and monks — there seems to have been little interest.

The chronicler Rodulfus Glaber was keenly aware of the two millennia of 1000 and 1033 but he only suggests that they were occasions of divine grace — wasted on a world that quickly returned to sin.

But around this time the world was changing. The economy was expanding, money was coming into circulation, and new ideas were circulating. As 1033 approached, huge crowds of people, now having the wherewithal, went to Jerusalem, and Glaber says that a few thought this might portend the coming of an anti-Christ but makes clear that he was not among them.

In a curious way the period has left its monuments. There was a new mass religious devotion, which combined with the new wealth in the building of "a white mantle of churches" all over Europe. The great cathedrals are a lasting monument to the vigour and enthusiasm which pervaded western civilisation around 1000. — *(Dr) John France, History Department, University of Wales, Swansea*

***WHY* was the Royal Navy known to sailors as "The Andrew", and is it still so-called?**

THE use of the term "Andrew" to mean a ship dates back to the time of Shakespeare. In The Merchant Of Venice there is a reference to "my wealthy Andrew dock'd in sand". It is thought to have originated with the capture of the Spanish ship St Andrew at Cadiz in 1595. — *M P Earles, London*

THE origin is obscure, and the explanation relating to Andrew Miller (March 2) is not the only one. Earlier sources have it that "Andrew" was a slang name for a Man O' War, or that Andrew Miller was a supplier of provisions to the Royal Navy or that the press gang officer was named Andrew Walker. But the most reliable lists of Royal Navy officers have no mention of either Miller or Walker. It's perhaps safest to consider the derivation as yet another mystery of the sea. — *Iain MacKenzie, Maritime Information Centre, Greenwich, London*

Any answers?

WHY* don't we have ring-pulls on all cans and tins? Soup could be much easier to open. — *Eve Callett, West Wittering, West Sussex

IF THE* next sperm in the queue had fertilised my mother's egg, would I have been in various ways different, or would someone else have been conceived in my place? — *W S Gilbert, London

WHEN* I was in Norway, on the North Cape cliff, last June, I couldn't tell west from east since the midnight sun set and then rose practically at the same place on the horizon. How could I have found out? — *Jean Brossard, Paris

Answers should be e-mailed to weekly@guardian.co.uk, faxed to 0171/+44171-242-0985, or posted to The Guardian Weekly, 75 Farringdon Road, London EC1M 3HQ. Readers with access to the Internet can respond to Notes & Queries via http://nq.guardian.co.uk

Letter from Kenya Robert Walker

Bringing up baby

THE YOUNG woman screamed again, obviously in agony. It had been difficult enough getting her into the car but this was worse. She struggled desperately between the two older women, alternately screaming then fighting for breath. The woman next to me elbowed me as she manoeuvred to get a better hold of her.

I was concentrating as hard as possible on missing all the bumps and potholes. I knew there was a bad one before the roundabout. I missed it. We were doing OK. Then the back wheel clipped something. A small bump. I tensed. An awful groan. I glanced over to apologise. Then we hit it, the big pothole after the roundabout. Another scream, worse than before. The patient fainted.

"Be careful."

"Watch the road."

"Oh God, sorry, sorry" (me).

We were approaching the hospital. Almost there, some good smooth driving. But then, I'd forgotten the small little bumps on the last bit, like serrations. Would that make it worse? Bump, bump, bump.

"Oh God" (me).

An awful scream.

"I'm dying."

"God has you."

Another unbearable scream.

"My God, it's coming."

Then, a sound, indescribable, which I'd never heard before — a kind of whoosh. There was a strangled cry. Another elbow in the face for me. It had indeed arrived.

It was getting pretty difficult to keep my eyes on the road. Four people in the front of a Toyota pick-up is a definite squeeze, and with one of those giving birth it makes driving decidedly difficult.

I glanced down and saw the two older women both frantically manoeuvring between the girl's legs. Then, looking up, I saw we were about to collide with the hospital tree. We stopped abruptly. The male relatives on the back were ordered to find some string and then the nurse. I was still holding the steering wheel and looking ahead, dry-mouthed. A piece of string was passed through the window. Yet another elbow in the face for me. More manoeuvring from the old women. The baby was passed out of the window.

I decided it was time to get out and bond with the men. Some solid murmuring and nodding. The nurse came strolling towards us.

Dawn was just breaking and her starched white outfit reflected the first rays of sun. She grinned and asked what I'd brought her today — I had become a regular ambulance driver for sick neighbours. I smiled weakly and nodded to the grandmother now sitting beneath the tree cleaning the infant and blowing into its nose.

After seeing to the child, she went to inspect the mother, still in the car and now conscious. The mother was led inside, followed by the grandmother proudly carrying her new grandson.

I leant on the car, then noticed on the seat and the floor the incredible amount of debris a new life brings with it when it emerges. I'd never imagined all that. I knew it could be a bit messy but the sheer volume of it.

It had begun early that morning with a banging on my door from a neighbour saying that someone close by was in labour with her first child and having problems. I drew up outside the house and heard the screams and the sound of women arguing heatedly. The woman had been in labour all night. Now the younger women wanted to take her to hospital, but the older ones were refusing.

MANY older women among the predominantly Somali population of Kenya's Northeastern Province still prefer traditional birth attendants. The nomadic population have little choice. The younger generation who live in towns have grown up with a government health care system that gradually improved from independence until the 1980s. But Kenya's tough economic policy since then has meant drastic cuts in health and education spending. Hospitals often run desperately short of vital supplies. This is worst here in Wajir and other parts of Northeastern Province.

The conflict over which type of medicine to choose can be seen in many families. In this case, agreement finally seemed to be reached. The screams were coming closer and the expectant mother emerged from the house carried by four women. There was a struggle at the door of the pick-up, but finally they bundled her in, the men jumped in the back, and we were off.

It seemed only minutes later we were back at the same house. Everyone was now relaxed and smiling, and the car was cleaned by the relatives. I had to sit down. The general consensus was that the drive had speeded up the labour, especially the bumps in the final approach. One man told me he would rely on me when the time came for his wife. I smiled weakly.

A Country Diary

William Condry

MACHYNLLETH: We have lost a good friend; so have the seals and seabirds of Cardigan Bay; and so has the wildlife for miles around. For many years, the late Alan Bryant ran his hospital at New Quay, Ceredigion, devoting his life to the care of a wide range of injured or sick creatures that people brought to him and his wife.

Here, along the shores of Cardigan Bay and all round the coast of Pembrokeshire, we dread even more the prospect of man-made disasters. A year ago the Sea Empress hit the rocks at the entrance to Milford Haven, spilling a huge amount of oil. We are left to wonder if anything has really been learnt from that mishap?

This is a region under threat. As if all these dreadful tankers were not enough, we have the ever-growing menace of oil and gas exploration offshore. The Government assures us that the environment is safe in their hands. So why could they not have declared sacrosanct the area of sea around Pembrokeshire, so rich in wildlife? Those of us who saw the oil pouring out of the Sea Empress wondered if anyone in authority cared a fig for the environment. We shall be even more despairing when we can look out to sea at night and see an array of brightly lit oil-rigs.

Bonus cuts likely after bank scandal

Lisa Buckingham

A FRESH initiative to revamp bonuses and so stamp out the wildest risks taken by City of London derivatives traders is expected to follow the $80 million scandal at NatWest Markets that this week helped to wipe nearly $900 million off the stock market value of the banking group.

Anthony Bellchambers, chief executive of the Futures and Options Association, said the FOA was likely to consider proposals to provide better links between salaries and long-term performance. It might issue new guidelines to improve the scrutiny of dealing in complex financial instruments where failures have opened the way for incidents such as the Barings collapse and the Sumitomo copper scam.

NatWest insisted the $80 million charge it will take against first-half profits was a conservative provision for the losses incurred by the "mis-pricing errors" believed to have been booked by Kyriacos Papouis.

The young interest rate options trader, who had worked for NatWest Markets for about two years in what was his first City job, left the banking group towards the end of last year and was said to be "on leave pending further information" by his new employer, the US securities house, Bear Stearns. There was no comment from Neil Dodgson, suspended for failing properly to supervise Mr Papouis.

Despite intensive investigation over the weekend by teams of forensic accountants, NatWest said it was likely to take weeks before its inquiry into the mis-pricing scandal was complete, although a spokeswoman said it appeared unlikely that more heads would roll.

Meanwhile NatWest heightened its internal supervisory systems in an attempt to head off similar débâcles elsewhere in the organisation.

The FOA's move on remuneration is expected to be welcomed by the Bank of England, which this week issued a warning about the dangers of tempting City traders to take risks to achieve big bonuses.

Alex Brummer adds: The City is looking too accident-prone for comfort as an international financial centre. The hole in the accounts of NatWest Markets is symptomatic of deeper concerns.

A clear line can be drawn from the Barings collapse two years ago to the absorption of S G Warburg into the Swiss Bank Corporation and the difficulties at Morgan Grenfell Asset Management. All these events can be traced to weaknesses inside City-based financial houses, most obviously the bonus structure that provides such huge incentives to successful traders that it pays them to cheat, and encourages internal supervisors to see no evil. The FOA's backing for a more rational bonus structure, while welcome, should have come much earlier.

A second problem is the investment priorities of City houses: Deutsche Morgan Grenfell will think nothing of paying multi-million transfer fees to get a good trader or fund manager, but will not consider applying similar sums to the compliance or risk assessment officers whose duty is to keep more adventurous traders in line.

Finally, there has been a woeful neglect in putting in place the processing systems to support the volume of trading in derivatives.

In Brief

THE US stock market suffered a further bout of alarm when Federal Reserve chairman Alan Greenspan warned again that "caution seems especially warranted" after the recent rise in the Dow Jones to new record heights.

THE shame of losing $2.6 billion through unauthorised dealings by its chief copper trader, Yasuo Hamanaka, has finally claimed a boardroom scalp at Japanese conglomerate Sumitomo, with the resignation of chairman Tomiichi Akiyama. Meanwhile, RTZ-CRA, the world's biggest mining company, has admitted that it has been battered by tumbling copper prices in the wake of the Sumitomo scandal.

JAMES BAX, former boss of rogue trader Nick Leeson, has been thrown off the register of top City directors for 21 months and told to pay back $16,000 costs. Mr Bax was criticised in the 1995 report of the Board of Banking Supervision for having "failed to concern himself" with Leeson's control of the Barings trading operation in Singapore.

SIMON Robertson, chairman of Kleinwort Benson merchant bank, has resigned after a row over the integration of Kleinwort into the German group Dresdner, which bought the British bank in 1995.

SHADOW chancellor Gordon Brown has unveiled plans to scrap Britain's economic policy-making structure to make way for the biggest shake-up at the Treasury and the Bank of England in 30 years. If Labour is elected, he will set up a US-style Council of Economic Advisers, as well as a new system for the Bank of England to advise on interest rates.

MORE than 2,000 jobs are to be cut by the newly privatised railways companies in the North of England, as firms with rail passenger franchises squeeze jobs to try to keep within tight government guidelines and produce a profit.

FOREIGN EXCHANGES

	Sterling rates March 3	Sterling rates February 24
Australia	2.0608-2.0634	2.0952-2.0978
Austria	19.29-19.31	19.18-19.20
Belgium	56.53-56.63	56.26-56.38
Canada	2.2137-2.2158	2.2233-2.2255
Denmark	10.46-10.47	10.39-10.41
France	9.25-9.26	9.20-9.21
Germany	2.7411-2.7438	2.7260-2.7286
Hong Kong	12.53-12.54	12.64-12.65
Ireland	1.0292-1.0307	1.0274-1.0288
Italy	2,743-2,745	2,704-2,707
Japan	195.58-195.78	199.14-199.34
Netherlands	3.0827-3.0858	3.0658-3.0387
New Zealand	2.3102-2.3133	2.3406-2.3437
Norway	11.06-11.07	10.83-10.85
Portugal	275.38-275.71	273.98-274.21
Spain	232.55-232.78	230.72-230.94
Sweden	12.27-12.29	12.02-12.04
Switzerland	2.3883-2.3914	2.3738-2.3767
USA	1.6190-1.6200	1.6330-1.6340
ECU	1.4124-1.4144	1.4057-1.4074

FTSE100 Share Index down 24.0 at 4307.1. FTSE 250 Index up 12.7 at 4654.5. Gold up $2.00 at $362.25.

Fireman tackle the blaze at Crédit Lyonnais's Paris headquarters last year PHOTOGRAPH: PASCAL LESIRE

Aristocrat who lost her head

Mark Milner in Paris recounts the sorry saga of the state-owned French bank once dubbed Debit Lyonnais

FOR more than a century Crédit Lyonnais was an aristocrat among French banks, albeit of the second empire variety. It was one of a group founded under Louis Napoleon designed to help build an economy fit for one of Europe's most powerful nation states. Others included Crédit Agricole, now France's richest bank, and Crédit Foncier, where earlier this year angry staff took the chairman hostage.

After a century of sobriety, Crédit Lyonnais kicked over the traces. In the eighties, under the chairmanship of ambitious Jean-Yves Haberer, it went for growth on a global scale, determined to keep the French up there with the American bulge-bracket banks and the Japanese, with their apparently impressive balance sheets.

The state-owned French bank expanded at a bewildering rate. By 1992, it had more than 2,000 retail branches and 169 business centres in France, and the bank's familiar blue-and-yellow CL symbol had been hoisted over another 900 offices. There was scarcely a capital in Europe without a branch.

That year, however, marked the high tide, with the purchase of BfG in Germany making Crédit Lyonnais the largest bank in Europe. Then the roof fell in.

In 1993, as France's economy hit the buffers and long-term interest rates climbed, the domestic commercial property market took a bath. Crédit Lyonnais was not the only bank hit, but the shock was at least proportionate to its size.

In 1993, the bank lost 6.9 billion French francs ($1.2 billion). With the writing on the wall, Mr Haberer had already gone and the French government, as the bank's owner, brought in former engineer Jean Peyrelevade to sort out the mess.

But no one knew quite how big the mess was. As fast as the new management came up with a figure which needed to be written off, the loan book would turn even more sour. Losses in 1994 soared to Fr12 billion.

For the government, Crédit Lyonnais was a huge embarrassment, but as the controlling shareholder it could hardly walk away from its problems. As a result, rescue packages backed by the state have become an annual event. Despite three so far, in 1994, 1995 and 1996, yet another is currently under discussion.

The government pumped in some Fr4.6 billion as the crisis deepened. Bad loans and assets were hived off into a separate structure where losses were effectively underwritten by the state. The final bill facing taxpayers will not be known for years, but it will run into many billions. Little wonder wags dubbed it Debit Lyonnais.

In what must have seemed the nadir of the whole sorry saga on Sunday, May 5, 1996, Crédit Lyonnais' beautiful headquarters was almost gutted by fire. It seemed to provide an appropriate image — a burnt-out building for a burnt-out bank. Within weeks, the group's non-voting but stock-market quoted shares hit an all-time low.

HOWEVER attractive the symbolism, it would be wrong. By September, 200 staff were back at the Boulevard des Italiens working amid the scaffolding to the accompaniment of the tapping of masons' chisels.

More fundamantally, the bulk of the business carried on as normal. In 1995, it scraped back into the black, with a profit of Fr13 million. Newspaper reports, apparently based on high-level leaks within the bank, are now suggesting that the bank made Fr300 million last year. The same report suggests that this year the bank is on course to post profits of Fr3.5 billion.

So why is yet another support package under discussion? It is a question that Crédit Lyonnais' rivals from the private banking sector, such as Société Générale, will be asking with increasing ire.

The answer is straightforward. The French government wants rid of Crédit Lyonnais. The target date for the bank's privatisation is around the end of 1998 or early 1999. But who will buy, and what would they be getting? Stripped down to its pre-privatisation essentials, Crédit Lyonnais will be a bank with a range of retail and corporate banking services in France but one also able to offer mergers and acquisition, corporate advisory and asset management services from the US to Eastern Europe and from Africa to Asia. The US and Asian businesses are said to be highly profitable.

The French government seems to have two options, though much will depend on how big a package of state support Brussels will be prepared to nod through later this year.

The first option would be a stock market flotation. On the face of it, that looks attractive. If the leaks are right, Crédit Lyonnais could be brought to market on the back of rising, if modest, profitability.

The second, more likely, option would be to sell Crédit Lyonnais to another bank. Several snags spring to mind. Any bank wanting to buy Crédit Lyonnais would look to drive a very hard bargain. A French buyer would almost certainly find a large degree of domestic overlap which would require restructuring on a scale the French banking unions would be bound to fight.

In a couple of years' time, despite the difficulties, Crédit Lyonnais' international business should mean it is unlikely to be bereft of suiters. The most important question will be the price at which the government is prepared to exit from Crédit Lyonnais and the urgency which it attaches to the sale.

Last week the French government got an additional spur in the shape of disaster at another state-owned financial institution. Problems at the insurance group GAN mean it needs Fr20 billion of state support.

Commentators have not been slow to point out that the scale of GAN's problems are second only to Crédit Lyonnais'. French Treasury officials must be praying troubles do not come in threes.

Training for **Business**

In conjunction with The MBA Career Guide

MUCH has been written about selecting a business school for study. Many experts claim to know which is the best school. Many schools claim to be the best. Should an expatriate consider taking an MBA overseas, or at home? How does anyone about to embark on one of the major personal investments in his or her lifetime make a decision?

A systematic process for making the choice of business school should be adopted. The MBA Career Guide conducts research of schools and recruiter attitudes to assist you.

The MBA, or Master of Business Administration, is a graduate management degree that prepares professionals for management responsibility. Making the decision to take an MBA commits a candidate to making a stream of choices and future decisions which will occupy him or her for the best part of 6-12 months.

The first thing to do when considering business school is to try to narrow down the types of career you might like to pursue, balanced by a realistic self-assessment of your current abilities and skill base. Examine your motives carefully. Determining where you want to work after your studies should be a major part of this process.

Why ask these questions first? Well, for practical reasons, most application forms ask for your career aspirations and want to see a clear, cogent explanation of where you want to be in the future and why that school can help you get there.

The MBA Career Guide is designed to provide potential applicants with information for making an informed career decision based on the experience of others and the hard facts, at every stage of the process. Profiles of executives and MBA alumni will offer you an invaluable insight into the criteria you will have to meet in order to make your selection, while often indicating the schools which employers prefer, both internationally and locally.

We also conduct recruiter research which looks at the demand for MBAs around the world. We choose to look at the demand side because we find that the majority of people decide to take an MBA for career-related reasons.

Though many schools have become more flexible in recent years, the standard period for an international full-time MBA in the United States is two years. In Europe, London Business School offers a two-year programme, whereas IMD, INSEAD and other leading programmes are one year. The annual cost of an MBA can be as little as $8,000 or as much as $35,000 for tuition, with books and living expenses a further cost.

However, financial aid opportunities exist that can make the most expensive programmes affordable. Scholarships are offered by a variety of organisations, and many local banks offer low-start loans for the period of your study. In the United States, schools such as Wharton, Harvard and Stanford cost approximately $23,000 for tuition per annum. Individuals are advised to apply to the school of their choice and when doing so make specific inquiries about funding options. Applicants should also seek out alumni in their own country to learn from their experiences. This background research will pay dividends in helping you to make the right decision.

If you are not prepared to forgo employment but simply want to increase your understanding of management tools, then you should consider part-time and distance learning study. Many people start these programmes while still in employment. Part-time study restricts you to schools in the vicinity of your current employer.

If you have a reputable school near you then it is certainly a cost-efficient option ranging from $6,000 to $30,000 over two to three years. But you must be prepared to accept what can sometimes be a gruelling schedule to keep pace with studies and work. It is also important that your employer is understanding and supportive.

Nunzio Quacquarelli
European Editor, The MBA Career Guide

Window of opportunity: The commercial possibilities of the Internet are increasing PHOTO: MARTIN ARGLES

Getting connected

Stephen McIntosh assesses the advantages offered by multimedia

"THE impact of information technology over the next decade may be much more profound than many of us suspect," wrote Conor Kehoe of McKinsey & Company, in The MBA Career Guide two years ago. Over the next 10 years, he argued, electronic commerce would have a huge impact on many service industries and distribution activities, including banking and the purchase of goods and services.

Since that article, many companies have recognised Mr Kehoe's vision. USAir, for example, now allows travellers to book tickets via their own personal computers.

Similarly, the Internet already consists of tens of millions of active participants and all the signs are that these numbers will continue to grow apace.

"The Internet is a communications and information medium which offers many advantages over other more conventional communication tools. The two most important of these are its speed and its low cost," says Andrew Searle, an Internet entrepreneur with Pentacom.

Developments in Internet-specific technology, both hardware and software, are making it more user-friendly and more suitable for commercial activities. Software developments such as Java, Shockwave and ActiveX are now bringing full multimedia capabilities to the Web, and hardware developments such as Network Computer will mean that people will be able to connect to the Web via their television set.

Security on the Internet has been a major concern. Richard Ward, an Oxford graduate and a partner in Pentacom, has found that clients have been most concerned with "hackers intercepting private information transmitted by clients. This is as serious an issue as credit card fraud." Hence, companies in insurance or financial services that collect personal information over the Internet need to be just as aware of the security issues if they are to avoid potential liability suits.

Braxton Associates has developed a New Media Survey together with the Financial Times, to keep them at the forefront of new technology and to identify which ideas have commercial possibilities. The consensus is that the level of commerce over the Internet is set to take off this year.

Although forecasts for on-line trade vary enormously, the figures are impressive. IBM Retail in a recent publication forecast potential retail revenues of $150 billion by 2000.

So, what opportunities does multimedia offer MBAs? "Marrying technology and business is the key challenge for many of today's young MBAs," says Mr Kehoe.

Management consulting has moved rapidly into the multimedia era. Consultants who were well established within the telecommunications and/or computer sectors have transferred their skills to the broader multimedia issues.

Aimée Pitman of Gemini Consulting has found that working with its sister IT company, Cap Gemini, has enabled it to become a leading player in the field. "At Gemini we recognise that we cannot offer general business strategy without understanding how IT can propel our clients forward," she says. MBAs need to have an understanding of technology, but understanding the economic, emotional and political aspects is equally important.

Entrepreneurs are also flocking to the Internet. Richard Ward and Andrew Searle, an MBA from Durham university, set up Pentacom as an Internet development company specialising in interactive databases and security.

Mr Ward has drawn upon the skills of Oxford university graduates in establishing the company as a successful provider of multimedia services. An impressive list of clients includes Mercedes Benz, and in a recent survey of web sites for financial services brokers by Securities Interactive Magazine, Pentacom was the only provider given a top-five star rating for its work for Options Direct.

Many business schools have developed specialisations in the field of multimedia. In the United States, Michigan Business School offers an innovative MBA on the Internet which has met with early success. In the UK, City University Business School and Henley offer an interactive MBA. Aston university has a video-based MBA that remains one of the most innovative in the field. In Europe, Theseus Institute, SDA Bocconi and Rotterdam School of Management offer an MBA in information management.

However, the situation is developing rapidly as more and more business schools realise the need to be progressive in the development of technology and multimedia-related electives.

www.career-guide.com

MBAs wishing to work in multimedia should contact Stephen McIntosh at the Alumni Career Service at the web site above. Students can gain access to:

- Extracts from The MBA Career Guide past and present;
- Alumni Career Service job listings for MBAs, from around the world, updated every month;
- Profiles of over 100 recruiting companies (available from April);
- They can enter their CV and select companies of interest, on line.

City initiative a capital idea

by Clive Holtham

CITY University Business School in London has taken a layered approach to information technology, developing three areas of expertise: an overall IT/information management capability; research capability in multimedia; and specialist capabilities to deal with courses and contacts.

In 1989, the business school created Europe's first MBA speciality in information technology and management, recruiting new staff from a mix of business and academic backgrounds. This new strategic IT focus not only enabled a number of new specialist courses to be developed, but allowed for a revamp of the Information Management Core Course, producing an information management course centred on virtual organisations and electronic commerce.

In 1994, the school created a multimedia research group, in collaboration with two university departments, journalism and mass communications. Sponsorship was obtained from Ericsson and Telia (Swedish Telecom). The research group identified two types of multimedia: PC-based — a PC with a CD-Rom and sound card; and the convergence of a range of industries — computers, telecoms, TV, entertainment and publishing.

For the last two years, the school has also run an elective in multimedia, built around international speakers from the main multimedia production and consumption sectors. As London is the centre of Europe's multimedia industry, students have secured a wide range of summer projects, in the UK, Sweden and Germany.

Clive Holtham is Bull Information Systems professor of information management at City University Business School



How to beat men to the boardroom

Women must match the personal investment of their male colleagues if they are to succeed, says **Nunzio Quacquarelli**

AT A RECENT MBA seminar in Paris, I was asked to join the panel for a discussion on the opportunities for women in business. My co-panellists were an alumna from INSEAD, the European business school in Fontainbleau, France, a headhunter and an alumna from IMD business school in Lausanne, Switzerland, who is now also admissions director for the school.

Since this discussion took place, we have initiated a research project called Women in Business, and invited women executives, most of them MBAs, to comment on their career experiences, how they have succeeded in "making a difference", and to give advice for the current generation of women thinking of attending business schools around the world.

Family commitments is the traditional reason cited for women not reaching senior management. But this is increasingly seen as an excuse. Many companies have introduced flexible maternity leave, part-time working and sabbaticals.

Patricia Ferrando is placement director at IESE business school in Barcelona. She has an MBA from IESE and, although she has five children aged between three and 14, has managed to maintain a full-time professional career. She says that a combination of a good home help, strict time management and a willingness to make some sacrifice of personal freedom, go a long way towards successfully combining career and family.

Sexual discrimination definitely exists in individual companies around the world. In Europe and Asia, legislation attempts to protect women against these situations, but it appears to be inadequate. By contrast, many women have commented that in the United States the legal environment for preventing sexual harassment in the workplace has become too extreme, and the constant threat of legal action makes for uncomfortable working relationships.

Lack of investment in training and development is another reason for the relative absence of women at senior management level. There is strong evidence that women are under-investing in themselves, relative to men. Women perceive a lower probability of reaching senior management and, as a result, are less likely to invest in an MBA. Given the growing opportunities for women to ascend the corporate ladder, it should be of grave concern to all those committed to seeing more women in positions of leadership that still only between 20 per cent and 30 per cent of students at top business schools are women.

Among the panel there was a perception that certain countries offer far greater opportunities for women to rise to positions of leadership than others. There was general agreement that North America is the most liberated market in this respect, where the legal infrastructure often positively discriminates in favour of women and minorities.

To avoid lawsuits for sexual discrimination, US corporations are aware that they need women to be present at all levels of the organisation. This creates a strong impetus to hire top-quality young managers with great potential. In a recent survey by the European Commission, the list of women who have reached senior manager or board-level positions in the US was estimated at more than 8 per cent, compared with 5 per cent in the United Kingdom and less than 3 per cent for Europe as a whole.

Orit Gadiesh, a Harvard MBA and chairman of the board of international strategy at Bain & Company, argues that the growth of consulting in North America has provided a better career option for women who see themselves as prospective business leaders. She says: "When you think about where you want to work, you should really think about what you want to do . . . it is important from the start of your career to do what you enjoy."

Maureen Kempston Darkes, president of General Motors Canada, says: "Women are a critical and growing part of our employee base. In the past the auto industry was thought of as a man's world, but that is no longer the case. Today's economic and demographic realities demand that corporations first attract the best talent and then nurture and develop this talent."

So how does a major corporation such as GM help women develop their careers? "Changing the culture of an organisation is a long-term activity, but it is happening at GM. I believe that those women in an organisation who have met with some success have an obligation to assist others in the company. This is done directly, by providing mentoring, support and career development opportunities — and more generally by helping to lead the changes in culture and practices, to facilitate the fuller participation of women and minorities."

It is of grave concern that only 20-30 per cent of students at top business schools are women

How can an aspiring women executive help herself? "Women must understand the decision-making process and be able to influence the process and decision. Above all, I encourage people to set their goals high and commit themselves to 'making a difference'," says Ms Kempston Darkes.

In Asia, where the percentage of women in senior management is small, our research suggests that Western companies offer the best route for women to progress, and an MBA provides access to such positions. Karen Altuzzara, an MBA from London Business School, joined J P Morgan in 1977 and has progressed through various departments and positions within the firm.

After a term in New York on the J P Morgan Associate Training Programme, she spent a period in cash management, followed by several years in corporate banking in Paris. When her husband was posted to Japan, Ms Altuzzara put in a request for relocation. J P Morgan agreed to the move and she joined the treasury department in Tokyo.

An MBA is seen as a global management qualification, with English the universal language of business. Western consulting companies committed to Asia and determined to maintain their international standards of quality can rely on MBAs to meet these standards, and the sex of the applicant is not relevant in meritocratic organisations.

Susanne van Laarhoven graduated from Nijenrode University in the Netherlands in 1992 and is now human resources manager for ABN Amro Bank in the Asia region. She says: "Banking is such an international environment that people are judged purely on how well they perform. ABN Amro is planning to increase its Asian workforce from 3,000 to 6,000 over the next couple of years, so opportunities for men or women, especially with MBAs, will be enormous."

Fund management is also an exciting career option for women. Yosawadee Charnsethikul joined Fidelity in 1992 as an analyst, and in 1994 became a fund manager with more than $420 million under management. Born in Thailand, she attended the prestigious Chulalongkorn university before obtaining an MBA from the University of Illinois in Chicago. She says: "Southeast Asia is a region of opportunity."

Industry in the region continues to achieve rapid growth as production plants shift to low-labour-cost economies such as China. Though numbers of women MBAs entering industrial management are lower than in the service sectors, this growth still creates opportunities.

We have found evidence of several large Asian companies — including Samsung, Sony, Daewoo, Western Mining and Pasimco — which last year increased their recruitment of MBAs. Multinationals have also taken on more MBAs. General Motors, P&G and Eli Lilly seek younger MBAs with little prior experience, into whom they can instil their corporate philosophy.

J T Battenberg, president of GM's Delphi Automotives, says: "We value the innovation and expertise MBAs bring to us. We have placed MBAs in our operating units, in global strategic planning and in our international operations. Some of our vice-presidents were promoted to their positions during their early to mid-30s — we rely on that kind of current thinking to keep our management philosophy fresh." All these recruiters confirmed that they actively seek applications from women MBAs.

In Asia, research shows that Western companies offer the best route for women to progress

But it is not all plain sailing. K T Leung, a Cambridge graduate who used to work for a Malaysian multinational, decided to become a full-time mother. Her experience of industry was that beyond a certain level in the organisation, there still exists a barrier to progress in many Asian companies.

With regard to Europe, our research shows that southern European markets are the most difficult cultures for women in business. Even so, liberalism did not necessarily go hand-in-hand with equal opportunity in northern Europe.

In many European markets, less than 30 per cent of mid-level managers and administrators are women. At senior levels these percentages are even lower. While women make up 41 per cent of the total European workforce, 1 per cent are board members and women hold only 2 per cent of senior management positions, compared with 5 per cent in the UK.

France is slightly anomalous because it has few women at management level, but the number of women in board-level positions is above average. Several alumnae attributed this to a traditional male scepticism that women have to overcome. Ms Altuzzara says: "In the early 1980s I was virtually the only women in banking in France, and an American-Chinese one to boot. There was significant resistance to overcome, but my strong technical underpinning saw me through."

The Netherlands, although a relatively liberal market, is still quite conservative. Bonnie Moy, ex-placement director at Rotterdam School of Management and now recruiting manager for the US consulting firm AMS Management Systems, observes that "there are virtually no women in senior executive positions in Dutch companies".

We asked a variety of alumnae from the Rotterdam School of Management to discuss their experiences since qualifying for their MBAs. The results were generally positive, but varied from industry to industry. Gabriel Fesl, an associate with McKinsey and Company, found her MBA to be "a highly valuable medium-term investment". Mechtild Wagner, who now works for Philip Morris but previously worked for ABB, found that "the situation is better in consumer goods than in hard-core engineering".

We found that the UK has one of the highest percentages of women in management and administrative positions in Europe. The UK has a significant and growing number of women executives; in particular there are many women senior directors in services such as management consulting and investment banking, which are typically popular career choices for MBA graduates. Emma Rasiel is executive director for information services at Goldman Sachs in London, having received an MBA from the Wharton School in 1990. Much of her time at Goldman's has been on the trading floor — traditionally a male domain — where increasing technical sophistication means that merit is displayed by results. She sees more women entering the lucrative world of trading.

The UK is also progressive in terms of management education of women. Women make up 50 per cent of the class at the Ulster MBA (the highest reported percentage for a full-time MBA in the UK), followed closely by the University of Lancaster MBA, De Montford, Imperial and Leicester university, all with women making up more than 40 per cent of candidates in 1996. Cranfield business school in Bedfordshire estimates that the average salary for its women MBAs on graduation is $70,000. Professor Judi Marshall at the school of management, university of Bath, has developed a course in Responsibility and Business Practice, which looks at corporate citizenship and socially responsible business practices that allow women to realise their potential.

Companies are keen to recruit more women at the management level. However, the percentages of women attending MBA programmes fluctuate unpredictably from year to year. Many schools run scholarships or competitions for women applicants, but few are so well established as to be supported year in, year out. The onus is, therefore, on the women themselves to match the personal investment made by their male counterparts — if they seriously wish to compete for the top spots.

Point of discussion . . . companies are keen to recruit more women at the management level, but the percentage attending MBA programmes fluctuates year by year
PHOTOGRAPH: ANDY BLACKMORE

A wealth of opportunity

MBAs are providing the impetus for economic growth in eastern Europe, Asia, and Latin America, writes **Adrian Barrett**

ECONOMIC development is of vital importance, not just to the stability and prosperity of the people in a particular region, but for the well-being of all in the developed world. As a result, it has been gratifying to see an increase in the number of nationalities choosing to take MBAs and then returning to find opportunities in their own land.

In the case of eastern Europe, 1996 was a year of political uncertainty, which hindered economic development. In Russia, the uncertainty of presidential elections in which the return to power of a communist government was at one stage a real possibility was followed by anxiety over Boris Yeltsin's continuing health problems.

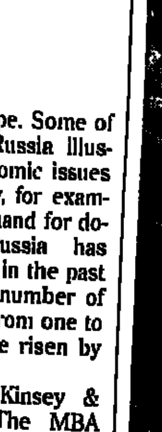
The war between Russia and Chechenia destabilised the Black Sea region, while the conflict in the Balkans has given way to an uneasy peace.

Beddowes and Company is one of the leading management consultancies dealing with privatisation issues in eastern Europe. Some of their experiences in Russia illustrate the complex economic issues at hand. Did you know, for example, that passenger demand for domestic flights in Russia has dropped by 60 per cent in the past three years, while the number of airlines has increased, from one to 200, and fuel costs have risen by 5,000 per cent?

Peter Kraljic of McKinsey & Company, writing in The MBA Career Guide, discusses some of the steps necessary for eastern European competitiveness in Western markets. He argues that the real issue is how quickly the ruling parties can embrace reform, and whether they are prepared to provide the investment in people and technology to make industry competitive in the new world market.

Among his recommendations, Dr Kraljic highlights the urgent need for training and development of managers (ideally, increasing the current number of MBAs from several hundred a year to many thousands).

Since that article appeared, London Business School has joined an initiative by INSEAD business school in Fontainebleau, France, and IESE in Barcelona, Spain, to promote a joint scholarship programme for eastern Europeans wishing to take a Western MBA, funded by ABN Amro Bank, Amsterdam, and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.




Hands-on approach . . . With Asian economies growing rapidly, the region is realising the potential of MBAs, and demand for them is outstripping supply PHOTOGRAPH: FT

This year has seen an upturn in the business fortunes of eastern Europe, with manufacturers of consumer goods already reaping rewards. PepsiCo International is experiencing positive growth, along with Procter & Gamble, Phillip Morris and Rothmans. In the field of finance, players include ABN Amro Bank, Cargill, Credit Suisse, First Boston and Salomon Brothers.

Asia is another region realising the potential of MBAs. Taesoo Jung spent 10 years working for IBM before he left for business school. "My job had already introduced me to American management perspectives, so, when faced with a choice of business schools, I chose IMD in Switzerland, which offers a global learning atmosphere," he says.

After graduating from business school, Mr Jung chose to join Arthur D Little, which, according to CEO Charles LaMantia, prides itself on hiring "people who are confident and resourceful and forward thinking and creative, but also easy to work with".

Mr Jung is one of those "blue chip MBAs" much sought after in the fast-growing Asian economies. After a five-year stint in the United States, he is now back in his native Korea, heading up ADL's Seoul office, whose clients include local conglomerates, as well as Western multinationals seeking strategic alliances.

Blue-chip MBAs are people with a strong academic background and a record of career achievement within a recognised company, who

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have decided to take an MBA. Many top schools seek to attract only this calibre of individual. Nevertheless, demand in Asia is significantly outstripping supply.

Dermot McMeekin, managing director of Andersen Consulting Strategic Services for Asean, says: "Right now, the growth of our Asean group is constrained more by our ability to recruit candidates of the right calibre than by market opportunities. A good MBA is important because we find that the skills acquired are directly relevant to the work we do."

Industry in the region continues to grow rapidly as production plants shift to low labour-cost economies such as China. There is evidence of several large Asian companies beginning to recruit MBAs for the first time.

In Latin America, over the past few decades, doing business has not been for the faint-hearted, thanks to massive inflation, military coups, economic meltdowns and false promises. To many, business school is just too risky.

However, many companies are succeeding and even prospering in the region, according to Mark Gottfredson of Bain & Company. In virtually every country, there are three positive trends:

- Fiscal and monetary stabilisation;
- Tariff reductions and opening markets;
- Deregulation and privatisation.

Paulo Ferraz Pereira, president of Banco Bozano, believes "the trend is one of healthy growth for Latin American economies," justifying growing investment in the region.

In such a scenario, more Latin Americans are entering business schools around the world, and both local and Western companies are beginning to seek out MBAs more actively. Diego Alcazar, director of MBAs at Instituto de Empresa says that annually, "about 4,000 Latin Americans go to study an MBA overseas". Up to 10 per cent of these students choose to study in Spain, to create a bridge into Europe.

Mariano Dall'Orso is a Latin American who completed his MBA at London Business School in 1996 and has joined Lucent Technologies as marketing manager for Latin America. Similarly, many Europeans committed to a career in Latin America choose Spain as their country of study.

FOR EXAMPLE, Angel Garcia graduated from Instituto de Empresa in 1986 and set up TARIC, a database of foreign commerce largely between Spain and Latin America and the rest of Europe, which has been very successful in encouraging intercontinental trade.

Business schools in Latin America are relatively unknown in the international arena. Currently, it is the top Spanish schools and US schools that are training staff and helping to establish a certain quality of management education within the region.

ESADE business school in Barcelona has a long-standing association with Latin America, and currently counts Chilean, Mexican, Cuban and Argentine professors within its ranks. Latin American students tend to account for about 15 per cent of its class each year.

ESADE is part of a consortium of schools — which also includes LSE, HEC-Paris, Universidad Nova Lisboa, Universidad Politecnica Madrid — which is financed by the European Union to teach management educators in Cuba. In Chile, Colombia, Brazil and Mexico, ESADE is funded by the EU to run courses for trainers in small- and medium-sized firms.

These are located within "Eurocentres", set up to promote trade between Europe and Latin America. So far, some 170 trainers and 2,000 members of the business community have been involved in this scheme.

IESE, based in Barcelona, has also been moving ahead, establishing a network of schools in countries wher previously management education was a rare commodity. Although each school relies on fund-raising, either by its own efforts or from local companies, IESE provides the framework, programme design, teaching material and staff until the school is able to run itself.

Several of the better known schools in Latin America are part of this group: including IPADE in Mexico; IAE, in Argentina; INALDE in Colombia; and IEEM, in Uruguay.

Adrian Barrett is director of Alumni Career Service.
All international applicants can register their details on The MBA Career Guide Internet site: www.atlas.co.uk/mbacareer

Prize-winners show they mean business

THE finalists in Manchester Business School's Guardian Women in Management Scholarship were all exceptional in this, the sixth year of the competition.

Professor Peter Barrar, director of the Postgraduate Centre, says the standard of applicants remains extremely high. Two places have been awarded — one for the full-time Master in Business Administration (MBA) programme, and the other for the part-time programme. Each is worth £15,000. This year's overall winners were Debra Barnes and Alice Owen.

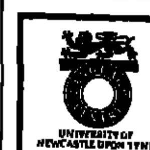
Debra Barnes, aged 31, is currently carrying out research at Nottingham university. After gaining her BSc (Hons) from Nottingham and a DPhil in physics from Oxford, she spent two years in Japan as a European Union Scientific Research Fellow, and the following two years as a Royal Society Fellow in Germany.

"My intention is to move into scientific management and I will use the Manchester MBA to acquire the business skills to help me make an immediate contribution, on both the management and scientific sides, when I return to the workplace," she says. "I hope it will help my career progression towards senior management." She is particularly attracted to the project-based aspect of the MBA, which she feels will complement the experience she already has.

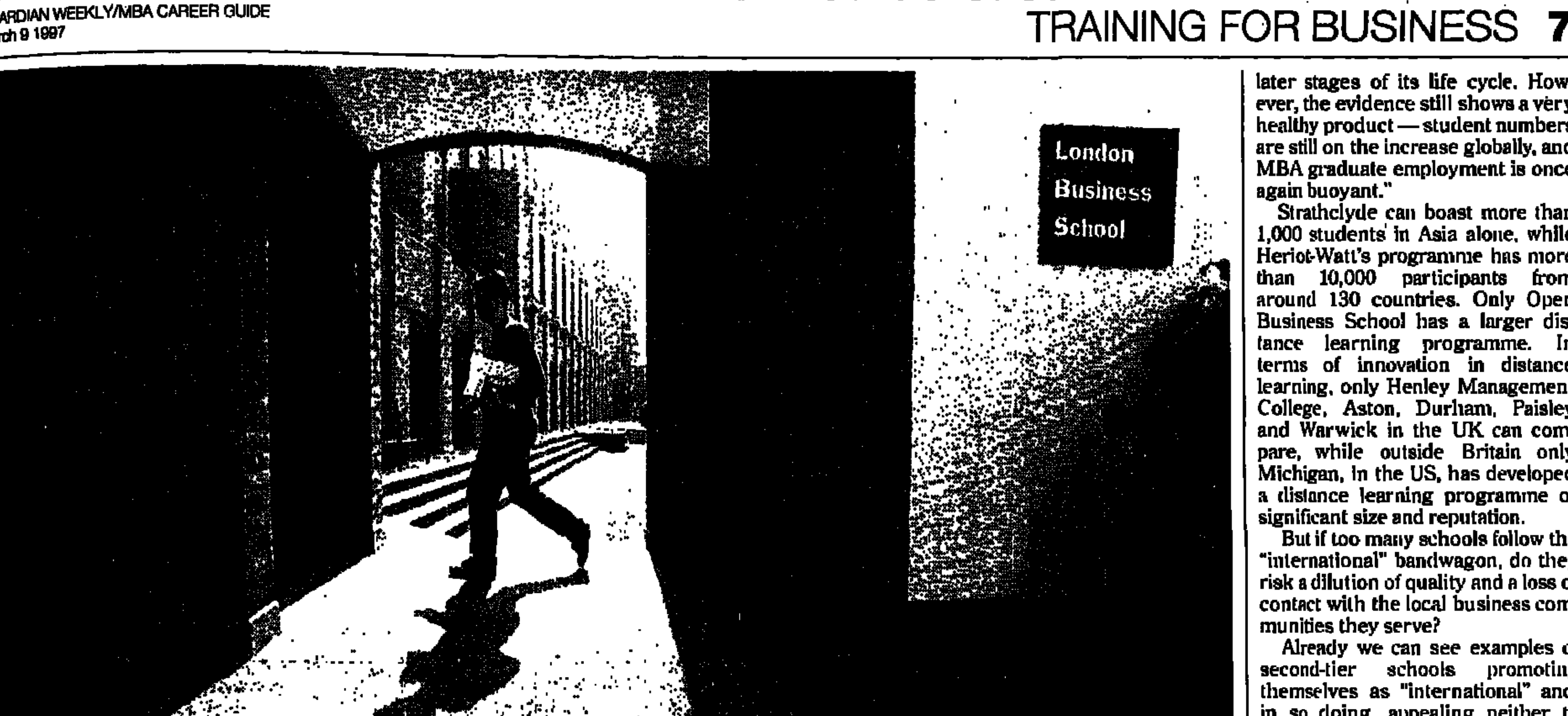
Alice Owen, aged 28, will continue to work at ICI Chemicals & Polymers as environment adviser while doing the MBA part-time. She joined ICI in 1990 after graduating from Brunel university with a BEng (Hons). She took a short break last year to do conservation work. She says, "My background is in engineering and I am keen to pursue the environmental impact of manufacturing. The MBA will broaden my outlook and enable me to establish a consistent set of ethics which will fit in with good working practice."

Professor Barrar adds: "Our experience has shown that those women who complete their MBAs are much sought after in the job market and compete very effectively against their male counterparts."

In addition, because of the high standards of finalists this year, two bursaries have been offered to the runners-up, Julia Hayhoe and Maria Meusz.





Capital idea . . . London Business School is committed to becoming a leader in international management education PHOTO: JEZ CONISON

Join the international brigade

Schools are developing courses relevant to the new global economy, writes **Nunzio Quacquarelli**

THE implications of globalisation for middle managers is dramatic. The resultant radical restructuring of industries and the fact that competition can now come from almost anywhere in the world has changed the face of modern business. Many business schools have responded to the challenge.

In such an environment of globalisation, many business schools have adapted to develop "international MBA" programmes, and many have done so very successfully.

Many schools in the United States have followed the innovative approach of Thomas Gerrity, dean of the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School, who completely re-engineered what was already a successful programme in 1991 and has subsequently seen Wharton rise to pole position in Business Week's annual rankings of American schools.

Stephen Kobrin is director of the Lauder Institute, the "nerve centre" of internationalism and the testing ground for new ideas for Wharton. He says: "We believe an internationalised MBA programme is a basic entry-level requirement for all our MBA candidates, who will have to function effectively in the global economy, whether or not their job description says 'international'."

In developing international business leaders, the Wharton School is increasingly looking beyond its MBA curriculum to a three-pronged approach, says Mr Kobrin: an internationalised MBA; an integrated programme of language and cross-cultural studies; and a solid background in international political economy.

Schools such as Chicago, MIT, Stanford and Columbia have all been equally determined to position themselves in the international arena. Chicago has always ranked in the top five of the Business Week rankings, and the school has long been recognised as a centre of excellence in finance — four members of the faculty have won Nobel prizes in economics since 1982. Stanford has for many years been the best known of the West Coast schools and has strong links with Asia-Pacific. MIT, because of its reputation in the field of technology, has acted as a magnet for companies and candidates in the engineering, IT and telecommunications fields, which are among the most global industries. Harvard, which resisted the trend to internationalise its programme until 1995, has finally succumbed to increasing external criticism by restructuring its programme last year.

Several European schools have also established themselves in the field of international management. INSEAD, in Fontainbleau, France, has always set out to be an international community. Of the 480 MBA students it takes in each year, more than 90 per cent come from outside France, ensuring its international credentials. In addition, according to

Students often learn more from each other than they do from their professors

research by The MBA Career Guide, INSEAD is second only to Wharton in terms of the number of internationally oriented MBA recruiters it attracts, with the vast majority of its 200-plus on-campus recruiters seeking international vacancies. Its requirement for three language skills and strict entry criteria ensure that it is an entry point for many of Europe's best young managers. Dan Muzyka, the MBA director at INSEAD, says: "INSEAD is a European institution with a global outlook."

Other schools in Europe that performed well according to our research include: IMD in Lausanne, London Business School, Rotterdam and IESE in Barcelona. London Business School, under George Bain, has committed itself to becoming a leader in international management education and to developing "supranational" managers, capable of working anywhere in the world. As a result, the mix of students is among the most diverse, representing more than 60 nationalities in 1996.

IMD, though much smaller than any other top international programme, has earned a reputation for developing top-class general managers. Meanwhile Rotterdam has concentrated on building the strengths of the Dutch merchant tradition by linking up with companies around the world, while staying focused on "informatics and informatisation". Finally, IESE is the oldest business school in Europe, and was founded originally as a joint effort with Harvard. Many recruiters look to IESE when seeking to fill positions in southern European and Latin America.

There are several reasons why many schools have followed the lead of the likes of Wharton and INSEAD, and tried to create an international MBA. First, globalisation is affecting a great many managers — we estimate that more than 50 per cent of recent MBA graduates are involved in jobs that require a knowledge of international business and involve interaction with overseas companies or clients. Second, from a revenue point of view, domestic markets can often be limited, and having an international focus helps attract overseas fee-paying students — full-time programmes, in particular, attract a high percentage of foreign students. Third, having a high mix of international students can, it is claimed, create a better learning environment for domestic students — the old MBA adage comes to mind, that students often learn far more from each other during their MBA than they do from their professors.

As our research shows, many British business schools have become distinctly international in their student mix, attracting many overseas junior and middle managers seeking to learn about British business and culture. These schools all argue that they are right to focus on internationalism.

Among top-flight British institutions, Bristol university offers one of the most international MBA programmes in Europe, in terms of student mix and recruiter profile. Students come from 20 different countries and are assigned multicultural teams to ensure they learn from each other's values. The top 10 recruiters come from all around the world: Miers Pierson, NatWest markets, Asahi Bank, Proton Cars, BMG, Pragobank, Central Bank of Venezuela, Fisherman's Friend, De Chazal Du Mee, Arthur Andersen.

Imperial College has strong links with Commonwealth countries. Its base in London and its status, as part of a famous technical college, helps attract international applicants. In Scotland, Richard Kerley, director of Edinburgh University Management School has more than 30 different nationalities represented on his full-time programme. About 15 per cent of his class are from Asia, and because of his school's strength in utilities, the school has a regular stream of Chinese students from power generation companies, such as Shanghai Power & Light. More recently both Oxford and Cambridge universities launched international MBA courses.

Less well known universities in the UK, such as Glasgow and Stirling, have also met with success in the international arena. Both have adopted innovative ways to attract overseas students.

Dr Peter Rosa at Stirling explains that his school has traditionally taken students from southeast Asia and the southern Mediterranean countries. This mix, he explains, is due to a willingness by families to invest in their children's education. As a consequence, Stirling has developed specialisations such as entrepreneurship, venturing and international trade, which lend themselves to the needs of students returning to family businesses or committed to international business. Dr Jeff Southern at Glasgow University Business School has developed a series of summer schools in Nice in France and Penang in Malaysia to enhance the international exposure of his school.

In recent years, both Strathclyde and Heriot-Watt Business Schools have won Queen's Awards for Export for the growth of their distance learning MBAs to foreign students. Chris Greensted, director of Strathclyde Graduate School of Business, the largest institution of its kind in Scotland, says: "We might expect that, as a relatively mature product, the MBA concept would be in the later stages of its life cycle. However, the evidence still shows a very healthy product — student numbers are still on the increase globally, and MBA graduate employment is once again buoyant."

Strathclyde can boast more than 1,000 students in Asia alone, while Heriot-Watt's programme has more than 10,000 participants from around 130 countries. Only Open Business School has a larger distance learning programme. In terms of innovation in distance learning, only Henley Management College, Aston, Durham, Paisley and Warwick in the UK can compare, while outside Britain only Michigan, in the US, has developed a distance learning programme of significant size and reputation.

But if too many schools follow the "international" bandwagon, do they risk a dilution of quality and a loss of contact with the local business communities they serve?

Already we can see examples of second-tier schools promoting themselves as "international" and, in so doing, appealing neither to international recruiters (because there are better schools in this field) nor to domestic recruiters (because they have not concentrated on serving the needs of this group). Candidates who do not seek an international career but wish to

In the '90s, managers have realised the need to build a set of demonstrable skills

work in their home country or local business community are much better off researching and applying to schools that are strong in this regard.

Cranfield is probably the most highly rated school among domestic UK recruiters, founded on a policy of selecting students with extensive experience and those who have worked for blue-chip companies or have excellent academic backgrounds. Warwick has adopted a similar approach, while Nottingham and Southampton have focused on the needs of their local business communities.

Southampton serves the needs of the hi-tech South Coast belt, with close links to companies such as IBM. Nottingham has a strong specialisation in health care and public-sector management, serving a large public sector community in the Midlands.

In the US, schools such as Michigan, Indiana and Darden have all risen in the Business Week rankings in recent years despite, or because of, their strong domestic orientation. Competition to be the best full- or part-time programme is intense. American business schools are the longest established and have the biggest programmes. In the UK, schools such as London Business School, Manchester and Cranfield proudly point to the fact that they can attract the most interest from international recruiters.

Furthermore, it is no longer enough for a manager to be diligent and hard-working in order to succeed in his or her career. The corporate restructuring of the early 1990s has shown that no one's job is completely secure. Managers have realised the need to invest in themselves to build a set of demonstrable skills that can increase their attractiveness to employers. As a result, an increasing number of MBA programmes are moving towards an international format.



The Washington Post

U.S. Certifies Mexico As Ally in Drugs War

Pierre Thomas

DESPITE MOUNTING evidence that narcotics corruption has reached the highest levels of Mexican law enforcement, the Clinton administration last week certified Mexico as an ally "fully cooperating" in the fight against drug smuggling.

By contrast, the administration concluded that Colombia's government remained infested with corruption and for the second consecutive year decertified that country's anti-narcotics efforts. The effect is to revoke Colombia's eligibility for most foreign aid and U.S. support for international loans, and represents a formal diplomatic snub.

President Clinton's decision to certify Mexico, which avoids those penalties, represented a vote of confidence for Mexican President Ernesto Zedillo. A number of key administration officials believe he is waging a serious effort against embedded corruption in that nation's law enforcement leadership.

But the action drew strong, bipartisan congressional criticism, in part because it came just a week after authorities in Mexico announced the arrest of that country's highest ranking anti-drug official on charges he provided protection for one of Mexico's most powerful drug lords. Senior administration officials said while they were shocked at the arrest, they could not ignore documented improvements in Mexico's fight against drugs and the important, strategic relationship between the two countries.

"Our certification process is not meant to measure the depth of Mexico's shortcomings, but the extent of its cooperation with us in overcoming them," Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright said. "The point, in other words, is not to keep score, but change the score in our favor."

Albright said Clinton's decision was in keeping with a number of previous decisions about Mexico, which were not always popular. Mentioning Clinton's support for the North American Free Trade Agreement and the economic bailout of Mexico, she said the action "is another difficult, but correct decision."

That view was challenged on Capitol Hill, where last week more than three dozen congressional leaders called on the president to decertify Mexico. Proclaiming the certification "a mistake," Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-California, said, "This decision says that business as usual is sufficient. I do not believe that it is . . . Have we received full cooperation? Not even close." Feinstein vowed to submit legislation aimed at overruling the administration's decision.

Senate Foreign Relations Chairman Jesse Helms, R-North Carolina, said "certifying that Mexico is cooperating with the United States in the war on drugs is, in a word, a fraud." He added, "The Mexicans are not cooperating; they know it, the president knows it, and the American people know it."

Critics charged that Mexico remains a major source of cocaine, heroin, marijuana, and methamphetamine entering the United States. These facts are a direct result of the nation's failure to cooperate fully with the United States, they said.

Assistant Secretary of State Robert S. Gelbard took issue with such assessments and noted the decision to certify Mexico fully was unanimous among top officials at the State, Justice, Defense and Treasury departments. Drug arrests, seizures and crop eradication efforts were up in Mexico in the past year and the nation recently has enacted new money laundering laws and anti-organized crime statutes, allowing such law enforcement tactics as wiretaps.

In addition, a number of senior administration officials feared decertification would weaken relations with an important and proudly nationalistic trading partner. They also were well aware of the widespread view in Mexico and elsewhere in Latin America that the United States should not be criticizing others because U.S. demand for drugs is a primary source of the problem.



A Mexican sailor stands guard as more than 1,000kg of cocaine is burnt as part of an anti-drugs campaign PHOTO HERIBERTO RODRIGUEZ

Colombian officials, who had waged an intense public relations campaign touting the nation's anti-drug effort, reacted angrily.

"We won't lower our guard in the fight against drug traffickers, but we will not bow our heads either," Colombian President Ernesto Samper said. He called the decision "demoralizing and unjust," and said Colombia will "re-evaluate" all counternarcotics agreements with the United States.

Other decertified nations are Afghanistan, Burma, Nigeria, Syria and Iran. Belize, Lebanon, and Pakistan were granted waivers.

● In the hours before the Clinton administration announced its decision on certification, Mexican officials were telling reporters that a local judge was to blame for freeing a reputed top narcotics kingpin.

Then, hours after Mexico was certified, the attorney general's office issued a statement admitting that its own senior officials had allowed Humberto Garcia Abrego, reputed chief money-launderer and brother of Gulf cartel boss Juan Garcia Abrego, to walk out the door of their offices a free man even as he was still under investigation for drug-related crimes.

U.N. Sacks Rwanda Officials

John M. Goshko in New York

SECRETARY General Kofi Annan has fired the chief administrator and deputy prosecutor of the U.N. war crimes tribunal for Rwanda after an internal investigation found widespread mismanagement and incompetence, the United Nations announced last week.

U.N. spokesman Juan-Carlos Brandt said Annan had accepted the resignations of Andronico Adede of Kenya, the chief administrator, and Honore Rakotomanana of Madagascar, the deputy prosecutor, because "continuation in their posts would not be in the interests of the United Nations and of the work of the tribunal in a case involving human tragedy of incalculable proportion."

The tribunal was established by the Security Council two years ago to try persons implicated in the massacre of more than half a million Tutsis and moderate Hutus during the tribal strife that engulfed Rwanda in 1994. Several months ago, the United Nations was rocked by complaints from Western staff members and media reports that the tribunal's functioning had descended into chaos because the administrators had given jobs to unqualified friends, relatives and lovers, discriminated against non-Africans and misused tribunal funds and equipment.

Two weeks ago, a report by Karl Paschke, the U.N.'s equivalent of an inspector general, said that while there was no evidence to substantiate charges of corruption and racism, his investigators had found massive mismanagement and waste at every level of the tribunal.

Agwu Ukiwe Okali of Nigeria, a graduate of the London School of Economics and Harvard law school, was named as Adede's replacement. A new deputy prosecutor will be named later.

The tribunal so far has indicted 21 people, and now is conducting its first trial against Jean-Paul Akayesu, a former Rwandan mayor charged with inciting the public to murder.

CIA Prunes Hundreds of Secret Informants

R. Jeffrey Smith

DURING THE past two years, the CIA has quietly dropped more than a thousand secret informants from its worldwide payroll because the agency's managers concluded they were largely unproductive or had likely been involved in serious criminal activity or human rights abuses in their countries, according to U.S. officials.

About 90 percent of those dismissed in the "agent scrub," as it was known within the spy agency, were simply judged to be poor sources of the type of information the CIA considers important in the post-Cold War era, the officials said.

But the group also included more than a hundred informants who the agency's officers concluded were implicated in major crimes abroad, such as killings, assassinations, kidnappings or terrorist acts, and who also were judged to have provided inadequate intelligence to remain on the payroll.

A disproportionately high number of informants dropped for such abuses were employed in Latin America during the 1980s and early 1990s, but some were employed in the Middle East and Asia.

The total number discharged approached one-third of the informants employed by the CIA at the time of the scrub, officials said.

Although human rights abuses by some CIA informants in Guatemala became well known in 1995, the magnitude of the cuts suggests the agency's clandestine service had a broader problem with informants than the CIA has publicly acknowledged, according to several officials who agreed to discuss the review on condition they not be identified.

The dismissals resulted from a year-long review of informants that began in 1995 and was the most exhaustive ever conducted by headquarters personnel.

The review constitutes a major legacy of former CIA director John M. Deutch, who left in December after 20 months at the agency's helm. President Clinton's nominee for his replacement, former national security adviser Anthony Lake, is now awaiting a Senate confirmation hearing.

Under a policy Deutch established early last year, the CIA's officers for the first time must submit annual reports assessing the quality of their informants and generally are prohibited from recruiting new sources implicated in human rights abuses or criminal behavior. Senior CIA managers can approve recruiting such persons, but only for national security reasons.

The new restrictions have provoked widespread controversy among CIA field officers, some of whom have privately complained to Republican lawmakers and aides on Capitol Hill that they have been discouraged from recruiting disreputable foreigners who could nonetheless provide data of importance to Washington. As one intelligence source said, "Mother Teresa is not a helpful person if you want to find out about the Indian nuclear program . . . and you don't get to the top of a narcotics cartel or a terrorist group because you have kept the books well."

But other CIA officers have disputed this view, claiming that the dismissals freed the agency's field officers to concentrate on recruiting new and better sources of information regarding "transnational" problems — such as nuclear and other weapons proliferation, terrorism, narcotics and international crime — that are now top CIA priorities.

CIA officials declined to discuss the review, citing a conviction that information regarding informants is extremely sensitive. CIA officials also sought to discourage individuals familiar with the review from cooperating with The Washington Post for this article.

But several current and former U.S. government officials explained that the worldwide agent scrub was ordered by Deutch after a smaller, secret review in late 1994 of CIA informants in Latin America startled agency managers by turning up abundant evidence that the agency employed many foreigners implicated in human rights abuses.

That review in turn was sparked by the agency's discovery in 1994 that a particular informant in El Salvador "had human rights problems," according to one official.

No details of that case have been disclosed. But it galvanized the Latin America division to begin shedding informants with similar problems from its payroll in early 1995, including some in Guatemala who were "credibly alleged to have ordered, planned, or participated" in abuses, according to a public report in June 1996 by the president's Intelligence Oversight Board that alluded to the broader review.

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Internet Story Could Affect Bomb Trial

Tom Kenworthy in Denver

THE PUBLICATION of a sensational story on the Oklahoma City bombing case could have profound implications for the upcoming trial of defendant Timothy J. McVeigh and for a journalistic fraternity that is grappling uneasily with the question of how to marry traditional newspaper publishing with the Internet.

For McVeigh, who goes on trial here on March 31, the obvious question with the unknown answer is whether he can still receive a fair trial given the widespread dissemination of a Dallas Morning News story asserting that he admitted his guilt to unnamed members of his defense team.

For the journalism profession, the question is whether the newspaper's decision to publish the story first on its Web page in advance of the print edition crossed a threshold in how newspapers deliver their product to readers.

As full of outrage as he was at the Morning News story, McVeigh's attorney, Stephen Jones, said he is confident that federal District Court Judge Richard P. Matsch "is going to see we get a fair jury."

But other members of Colorado's legal community who have been watching the run-up to the trial are considerably less sanguine about the impact of the story, in which McVeigh was said to not only have admitted his guilt to his defense team but to have chosen to detonate the huge bomb during daylight hours in order to ensure a high "body count."

"This is one of the saddest moments in journalism and now it will be one of the saddest moments in law," said Larry Pozner, a Denver criminal attorney and vice president of the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers. "It has destroyed any chance of a fair trial."

Although there have been a number of other leaks concerning evidence that will be used against McVeigh and codefendant Terry L. Nichols, Pozner said evidence will be introduced at trial and weighed for its credibility by a jury after hearing arguments from both the prosecution and defense. "It's an entirely different thing to say that McVeigh has confessed to the entire crime," he said. "That will never come into evidence."

But Albert W. Alschuler, a professor of criminal law at the University of Chicago Law School, said the possibility of empaneling a fair-minded jury would depend on how the story is presented and if there remained a serious question of whether the story was, as Jones insisted, a hoax.

"This is a classic sort of situation," Alschuler said. "If everybody in America knows that McVeigh has given a confession that is inadmissible, how on earth can you empanel a fair jury? On the other hand, how on earth could you let that man go after killing that many people? . . . If it stays with a big question mark on it, it is not hard to persuade jurors they should disregard it. It may be a complete fraud, and if it is not introduced, the jury is not supposed to pay attention to it, and it is possible to empanel a jury on that basis."

As to the question of whether a defense lawyer would ask a client if he is guilty, Alschuler said there are "two schools of thought on that: Some lawyers say, 'Of course I always ask because I cannot prepare a good defense unless I know the whole truth' . . . And others say, 'I don't want to know. I never ask.'"

Students of the media were more certain in their estimations of the impact of the Morning News decision to publish the bombing story on its Web site. The event, they said, represents a crossing of a journalistic Rubicon for print media and their electronic offspring.

"It's a landmark, it really is," said Jon Katz, who covers the media for Wired magazine. "It's journalism history. It's one of the first times, if not the first time, that a major, traditional news organization has chosen to break a story like this on its Web site." Katz said the electronic publication of the story is an encouraging sign that newspapers are learning how to fuse their traditional and electronic formats to the benefit of both.

Tom Rosenstiel, a former media reporter for the Los Angeles Times who directs the Washington-based Project for Excellence in Journalism, also said the Morning News had crossed an important boundary. "This is not an anomaly. This is definitely the beginning of a trend," he said. "The risk, of course, is taking newspaper people who are used to operating with a certain deliberation and throwing them into the speed of cyberspace," he said. "Time is always the enemy of accuracy and fairness."

The Dallas Morning News

March 1, 1997

McVeigh admitted bombing, memos say

Oklahoma suspect's attorney disputes credibility of documents

McVeigh Story: Timothy McVeigh has described for his defense team how he bombed the Oklahoma City federal building saying the daytime attack left a "body count" intended to get a point across to the government, according to confidential defense reports.

"We needed a body count to make our point."

Dallas Morning News used the Internet to break the story

Big Drop in U.S. Aids Deaths for First Time

David Brown

DEATHS FROM AIDS in the United States last year fell significantly for the first time since the AIDS epidemic began in the early 1980s, federal health officials reported last week.

The decline in AIDS deaths occurred in all regions of the country and in all racial and ethnic groups. However, the trend was not seen among women or among people infected with HIV through heterosexual contact — two demographic groups in which the epidemic is still growing.

Epidemiologists at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which made the announcement, believe deaths from AIDS is falling for two reasons. The number of infected people who are progressing to AIDS — the advanced, often-lethal stage of the disease — is leveling off. At the same time, better medical therapies are prolonging the survival of patients who are already at that stage.

The total number of deaths from AIDS in the first six months of 1996 was 22,000, compared to 24,900 deaths during a similar period in 1995 — a 13 percent decrease, according to the data compiled by the CDC. Although there had been slight declines for short periods earlier in the epidemic, last year's was by far the largest.

The trend appears to have begun in 1995. Only some of the fall can be attributed to the growing use of protease inhibitors, a potent new class of antiviral drugs that didn't become widely available until last spring. Protease inhibitors are now commonly used in combination with two other antiviral drugs in what's become known as "triple therapy."

"AIDS deaths began to plateau in 1995, and that really suggests that something began to happen before protease inhibitors were licensed by the FDA [Food and Drug Administration]," said John W. Ward, CDC's chief AIDS epidemiologist.

Two forces, in particular, appear to have preceded the arrival of the first protease inhibitor in December 1995. One was the use of two-drug antiviral combinations, which prolonged survival among AIDS patients even though they are less effective than triple therapy. The second is more widespread use of an anti-infective pill that helps prevent *Pneumocystis carinii* pneumonia, the most common "opportunistic" infection in AIDS patients, whose immune systems are severely damaged.

The decline in nationwide deaths from AIDS reflects a trend detected in several cities in the last few months.

Daily deaths from AIDS in New York fell by about 50 percent between November 1995 and November 1996. Total AIDS deaths in King County, Washington, which includes Seattle, fell by 43 percent last year compared to the average annual number of deaths in the preceding three years. In San Francisco, total AIDS deaths fell 15 percent between the last half of 1995 and the first half of 1996. The drop in mortality nationwide was not evenly distributed among groups of AIDS patients.

Although the decline was 13 percent overall, it was 32 percent among American Indians and Alaskan natives, 21 percent among non-Hispanic whites; 10 percent among Hispanics; 6 percent among Asians; and 2 percent among non-Hispanic blacks. AIDS deaths fell 15 percent among men, and rose 3 percent among women.

Worldwide, AIDS deaths continue to rise. Last year, more than 1.5 million people died from the disease, which amounted to about 25 percent of all AIDS deaths since the start of the epidemic.

Counterspies Plead Guilty

Charles W. Hall

EARL EDWIN PITTS, the former FBI counterintelligence agent accused of spying for Moscow, pleaded guilty last week in federal court in Alexandria, Virginia, and former CIA agent Harold James Nicholson pleaded guilty to espionage charges on Monday, federal officials announced.

Pitts's decision to cut a deal and Nicholson's plan to do the same spare the government the need for public trials and may earn reduced sentences for both men. They also unexpectedly wrap up the country's two most serious espionage cases since Aldrich H. Ames was caught spying for Russia in 1994.

Just before Pitts's hearing on Friday last week, Nicholson, 46, signed an agreement saying he would plead guilty to selling secrets to the Russians from 1994 until his arrest in November, U.S. Attorney Helen F. Fahey said. Both Fahey and Nicholson's attorney, Jonathan Shapiro, declined to discuss the substance of the agreement, saying the case remains under a gag order.

Pitts's plea and Nicholson's agreement are tremendous breaks for U.S. intelligence officials, who still do not know exactly what the two men may have given away. As part of the agreement, Pitts, 43, pledged to tell federal officials exactly what he turned over to the Soviets when he was spying actively for them from 1987 to 1992.

Pitts agreed to plead guilty without a promise of a reduced sentence, which law enforcement sources said reflected the strength of the case the FBI built against him during a 16-month sting in which agents posed as Russian spy handlers.

Federal prosecutors and FBI officials hailed the plea bargains, saying they bring a swift end to spy cases that shook the morale of the FBI and CIA and would enable the nation's spy-catchers to begin to assess and clear the wreckage.

"It was terrible to learn that one of our own had betrayed us, but the FBI has to move on," said Thomas J. Pickard, assistant director of the FBI's Washington field office. "On Monday, FBI agents will return to work to ensure that justice is done."

Pitts pleaded guilty to one charge of conspiracy to commit espionage, admitting to U.S. District Judge T.S. Ellis III that he spied for the Soviet Union beginning in 1987, while he was a counterintelligence agent in New York. He also pleaded guilty to attempted espionage, telling the court he gave numerous secret documents to his fake Russian handlers.

High Occupancy at the White House Inn

COMMENT
Ellen Goodman

FINALLY THEY hit a number in the whole fund-raising story that is making jaws drop. And it doesn't even have a dollar sign. Nine Hundred and Thirty-Eight House Guests? That's 938 guests in 1,460 days in one term. And that's including 35 relatives and 72 friends of Chelsea.

Even if these guests came two-by-two to share the beds, that's gotta to be a thousand washed towels and over 450 changes of sheets. Who knows how many bars of soap were scoffed by folks who apparently had every reason to feel, well, entitled.

The only person who didn't sleep in the Lincoln Bedroom was Honest Abe. All he ever did there was sign the Emancipation Proclamation. How did he know that someday his ghost would be haunting the halls desperately searching for a bit of privacy?

In Our Nation's Capital, the White House sleepover list is the required agate read of the moment. This "A List" is the source of more envy than anything since Nixon's enemies list.

But outside the Beltway, we are talking Hostess Hell. Nine Hundred and Thirty-Eight House Guests? This is the nightmare head count for anyone who ever owned a big house by the sea.

Imagine what *your* spouse would say if you penned a chirpy little note like the one Bill authored: "Ready to start overnights right away." How about: Bye-bye?

In a recent column of her own, the hostess with the mostest wrote, "We've had a lot of guests staying in the Lincoln Bedroom and the Queen's Bedroom across the hall." A lot? It's enough to make you worry about the girl.

The Clintons don't have to personally fluff up the pillows or clean the toilets, and there aren't any mints on the pillow. But you can't just hand Barbra Streisand the key to the mini-bar and tell her to help herself and have a nice night's sleep. Besides, these are not your average guests. What on earth did Steve Jobs think when the Apple mogul discovered he was in a room without a modem? Did Ted Turner grumble about the TV?

And how do the folks in the White House deal with the mannerly dilemmas of modern hospitality: To let people bring their Significant Other or not? One room or two?

There is a history to this public housing. The Roosevelts virtually turned the White House into a commune. FDR's kitchen Cabinet and Eleanor's friends came and lived there for years.

But even if this president doesn't break the record on the room rate — and he's going for the gold — he must hold the title in turnovers. Talk about gregarious. Talk about one-night stands. These were "my friends and I was happy to have them here," Bill declares. Indeed, it appears that he has been having pajama parties with pals from Arkansas, Hollywood and Wall Street at 1:30 in the morning.

When all is added up — financially — and subtracted — ethically — from the Sleepover Scandal, we get a portrait of a first family that's almost never home alone. We now know that Hillary never threw a lamp at her husband. Somebody would have heard.

At least we don't have to worry about the Clintons when Chelsea goes off to college. This is one couple who won't be suffering from an empty nest.

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China Dissidents Get Edgy in Hong Kong

Keith B. Richburg
in Hong Kong

ONE FLED China in secret, to avoid jail and seek refuge overseas. Another finds himself here by accident after a trip that was supposed to take him back to China. A third says he'll stay and wait for China to come to him.

The three men are among an estimated 100 dissidents from China who now live in uncertain exile in Hong Kong. Some asked for political asylum and are awaiting passage to friendly third countries. Others are stranded after crossing the border clandestinely and being picked up by local authorities.

The majority were involved in the 1989 pro-democracy demonstrations at Beijing's Tiananmen Square and in other Chinese cities — most after serving time in prison and continuing their democracy activities once released. Some fled to Hong Kong after Chinese government crackdowns on dissent.

While their circumstances vary, these exiles share one thing: They are believed to be in danger of arrest and imprisonment if they stay beyond midnight on June 30, when Hong Kong's British rulers retreat and this prosperous colony of 6.3 million people is handed back to China and its Communist leaders.

About 60 of the Chinese exiles do not want to leave — they have married, taken jobs and generally keep a low profile. The rest are looking to get out, and fast.

"It's very dangerous," said Hugh Yu, 30, one of the former democracy advocates. "We have no passports, no documents at all. We're just here under the Hong Kong government's protection. But after the changeover, we'll all become illegal. They could send us back to China or put us in jail. Or, if we stay here, they could isolate us, harass us, prevent us from ever finding a job.

"Everyone who has a chance must decide whether to stay in Hong Kong or leave," he added.

"I think after the change of government, they will let the economics here continue, but politically they will tighten their control," said Li, a 31-year-old student activist who asked to be identified only by his surname. "As for these so-called troublemakers, they will let them go abroad, or they will restrict their movements."

Han Dongfang, the most prominent of the mainland exiles here, has been encouraging the other dissidents to leave, even though he himself plans to stay and face jail. Han spent 22 months behind bars before being released to undergo medical treatment in the United States. When he tried to return home to continue his union organizing, Chinese police carried him to the border and dumped him in Hong Kong. A week later, China declared his passport invalid. "They kicked me out illegally," he said in an interview.

With little fanfare, Western countries appear to be moving to help some of the dissidents leave. Of the roughly 100 here, about 40 are waiting to be resettled in third countries, including the United States. Sources said last month that before China takes control, all of those who want to leave will be given third-country refuge, with about a dozen going to Britain and a few to the United States and the rest scattered among various mostly European nations.

Efforts to spirit Chinese dissidents through Hong Kong to the West began in earnest after the June 4, 1989, massacre at Tiananmen Square. A clandestine network called Operation Yellowbird, using local democracy activists, businessmen and even organized crime syndicates, brought out hundreds of democracy activists. Many of them ended up in the United States.

The flow of dissidents slowed to a trickle after 1990, but Western officials say the operation has continued, even though diplomatic missions here maintain a low profile to avoid angering the communist leadership in Beijing.

"This is the end of an eight-year program to very quietly, without putting it in China's face, allow people to move off to a third country," said a Western official speaking anonymously. "It appears China looks the other way, and they don't care about it as long as it's kept quiet. If you push it into China's face, it can make them react." The exiles waiting to be resettled, he added, "are the endgame."

For some dissidents, though, the anxiety is in the waiting, with less than four months before Hong Kong becomes a part of China. Some of those who want to leave have no idea when they can go or what country will accept them. "This waiting period is too long," said Li, who was last interviewed by a Western consulate four months ago and has not heard whether he has been accepted as a political refugee.

In China, Li had fallen under suspicion of being involved in student-organizing activities being conducted by prominent dissident Wang Dan. A student union leader during the 1989 protests, Li had already been imprisoned for "counterrevolutionary propaganda and incitement."

He escaped from China in May 1995, traveling for two weeks, "step-by-step," as he recalls it, and being pursued by Chinese security forces.

WHEN he does leave Hong Kong, Li hopes to continue his democracy campaigning from abroad. But his first goal, he said, will be to finish his education, get a job, and find a means to support himself and his wife. Only after that, he said, "I'll see what I can do for democracy."

Yu also knows something about the inside of a Chinese prison; as a 1989 student activist in southern China, he spent one year in prison, but was never tried.

Yu went into business in China after his release. Using an assumed name, he sneaked into Hong Kong for reasons he asked not to be disclosed. He says he always intended to return to China, but one day before he was due to go home, he was arrested by Hong Kong police, who routinely patrol the streets looking for illegal immigrants from the mainland. He now calls himself an accidental exile.

If Han's case is unique, it is because he has no intention of leaving. He's stranded in Hong Kong not after escaping China, but after trying to sneak back in. After nearly two years in prison, Han was allowed to go to the United States in 1992 for treatment of tuberculosis. He had his right lung removed in an American hospital, regained his strength, and planned his return to China to continue his fight for labor rights.

He made it to Guangzhou before Chinese police came knocking on his hotel room door. Han was carried to the Hong Kong border by a half-dozen policemen, who tossed him to the other side. He has since taken up his labor rights campaign here, speaking out at forums and producing a monthly bulletin about Chinese labor issues that circulates through factories in the mainland.

Han said he is determined to stay on what will soon become Chinese soil. He also plans to continue his labor activities, even though Chinese officials have warned that Hong Kong must not be used as a base of subversion after July.

"I don't want to go back to jail," he said. "I don't like jail. I don't want to lose another lung. But sometimes, if you want to change a situation, you have to stay with it . . . If you stay away, you can never change anything."

Canadians Take the Offensive

Howard Schneider in Toronto



Sign of the times . . . Nathan Phillips Square in Toronto, a symbol of a wealthier, more educated Canada whose people have grown raucous and demanding PHOTOGRAPH: JOHN HARRIS

POLITE? QUIESCENT? Canadians have created a national pastime of second-guessing the state of the national backbone. Even in today's relatively envious state of well-being, books are published full of quotes such as this from a member of Parliament: "Canadians will complain for a while, then they'll roll over."

Or this, from the late novelist Robertson Davies: "The Canadian is mildewed with caution."

But things may be changing. Perhaps it is due to Americanization. Perhaps, as some social scientists have suggested, it is because of Canada's evolution into a "self-actualizing," "post-materialist" society. Or something like that.

Whatever the cause, the country, by measures both exact and anecdotal, seems in the midst of swapping its gently self-deprecating past for something a little more brash.

There was a near fistfight in the House of Commons last month between two members of Parliament. A few days later, there was a second challenge on the House floor to "step outside," this one issued by Canada's defense minister to a political opponent who accused him of obstructing justice.

Canadians wondered about the security of their leaders last month after a man drove his car up the steps of Parliament and crashed into the doors of the building — which is unprotected by guards or the kind of concrete barriers the United States has erected around its legislature. In an era of homemade bombs and global terrorism, Canadians have not yet considered such measures necessary.

The security breach was reminiscent of an incident last year, in which Prime Minister Jean Chrétien wrestled a protester to the ground.

Nor is corruption unknown. In Saskatchewan, an expense-account scandal has snared several top members of a former conservative government; in Etobicoke, near Toronto, a top city official was forced out after charging tens of thousands of dollars on a city credit card, some of it for lunches at a local strip club.

At a public meeting in Toronto's stately and usually reserved Rosedale neighborhood, residents shouted down a government official like rowdies at a college protest; the government of British Columbia is being sued for lying; an official in Quebec says his government will use force to keep the province together if independence is declared. Two government document-shredding scandals are under investigation.

And as if that weren't enough, Miss Canada International, Danielle House, was charged in October with slugging another woman after spotting her in a Newfoundland bar with House's boyfriend.

"The inmates," columnist Allan Fotheringham wrote after surveying the growing list of dust-ups, "are in charge of the asylum."

It is a theme that has been examined, in more academic language of course, in a spate of recent studies on Canadian values and history. The researchers have come to similar conclusions. As Canada has grown wealthier, more educated, more cosmopolitan and more diverse, they say, it also has grown more raucous and demanding.

The image of Canada as a deferential society — one ordered around responsible government and with a high social premium put on not rocking the boat — is, according to what seems to be an emerging consensus, a thing of the past.

Pollster Michael Adams sees the change in generational terms, with younger Canadians expecting more but looking less to government or other institutions to deliver it. Journalists and historians say the shift is influenced by free trade and the emergence of a more integrated North American society.

Social scientist Neil Nevitte casts an even broader net, contending in his book, The Decline Of Deference, that Canada is simply experiencing what is to be expected as a society moves into a post-industrial era: As people become more educated, they are more willing to use their wits to shape their society.

Nevitte concludes that Canadians are becoming less confident in government, more intolerant, less devout, more supportive of workplace meritocracy and, overall, less deferential.

"It is a redistribution of interests and relevant skills," said Nevitte, a University of Toronto professor. "Education, attentiveness, information, interest, cognitive capacity — that is what comes with a highly educated people. The skill gap between politicians and citizens has narrowed, so Canadians are less inclined to accept without question the wisdom of their leaders."

The social tether has been particularly loose among the country's politicians, as the tenor of Parliament's daily question period makes clear.

When Reform Party House member Darrel Stinson heard Liberal John Cannis heckle him during a speech and call him racist, it was gloves off.

"Do you have the fortitude or the gonads to stand up and come across here and say that to me, you [S.O.B.]? Come on," Stinson hollered, shedding his coat and stalking across the House floor to his opponent.

No blows were exchanged, and Cannis later played down the incident as no big deal in modern Canada. "Heckling," he said in a televised interview, "is part of the process."

Confronted by a ruthless enemy in the shape of organised criminals from Jamaica — the Yardies — pumping crack cocaine into London and establishing their control with terrifying violence, Scotland Yard responded by allowing dangerous criminals to stay in Britain in the hope they would become informers. And, as **Nick Davies** shows in this report, some have gone on to commit rape, armed robbery and murder

How the Yardies duped the Yard

MARCIA LAWES was 24 years old. She lived in a small flat in a quiet street on the edge of Brixton in south London with her two-year-old son, Cassius, and her baby daughter, Malika. She had no work and she had no partner, and in the past she had suffered from a crippling depression, but she stayed in touch with her family, particularly with her elder sister, Mercy, and she was beginning to make a life for herself.

On Friday April 21, 1995, just after half past seven in the evening, Lawes was found dead in the hallway inside the front door of her flat. Her children had been staying with a childminder down the road and she had been on her own. No one had seen her for three days and it was her sister, Mercy, who had started to worry and who had taken some friends to find out what was happening.

When they forced open the door of her first-floor flat, Mercy saw Marcia lying sprawled across the hall carpet on her back, with many stab wounds deep in her chest and throat. Her clothes were dishevelled and it was apparent from the outset that she had been the victim of some kind of sexual attack.

Just over a year later, a Jamaican immigrant, Delroy "Epsi" Denton, aged 35, was convicted of murdering Lawes and jailed for life. When Denton's trial was over, there was a flutter of low-key publicity disclosing that he had been working as an informer for Scotland Yard. The Yard said nothing. What was not disclosed was that Denton was the beneficiary of a secret "squeal deal": in exchange for providing intelligence about other Jamaican gangsters in London, he had been allowed to remain in the country even though he was an illegal immigrant whose request to stay had been formally denied by the Home Office and even though it was well known that he was an unusually dangerous gangster. Lawes died because police and civil servants bent the law.

And Denton was not alone. A joint inquiry by the Guardian with television's World In Action has disclosed that he is one of a series of Jamaican Yardie gangsters who have been granted an illegal stay in Britain in exchange for informing on their partners in crime and who have gone on to indulge in an orgy of offending. These "squeal deals" are part of a wider picture of disarray in the Metropolitan Police, who have confronted a ruthless enemy with a strategy of chaos.

In the background, innocent Jamaicans complain that they have been pressurised to become informers by officials who have threatened to deport them unfairly unless they agree to provide information about their friends and neighbours.

It is 10 years now since Scotland Yard began to realise that the Yardies were spreading out from their stronghold in Kingston, Jamaica, where they run whole areas of the city in league with corrupt politicians and policemen. By 1987, there were blood-chilling reports from the US, where agencies logged more than 600 Yardie murders in the previous three years and estimated they were earning up to $9 million per month per city from the sale of crack cocaine. In one incident, a New York drug dealer tried to steal three ounces of cocaine from some Yardies: he was swiftly killed and his decapitated head was wrapped in masking tape and used in a celebratory game of football.

By 1987, they were making their presence felt in London, pumping crack cocaine into black housing estates, and using guns and knives with terrifying spontaneity. In response, the Metropolitan Police set off on a crazy zig-zag of policy, one year attacking the enemy, the next year denying they were a threat at all. In March 1988, they started Operation Lucy. By the middle of 1989, they had inflicted 400 arrests and 50 deportations on the London Yardies; their commander, Roy Ramm, had circulated confidential reports warning that the Yardies had "in my view, found a gap in the force's structures" and appealing for a permanent squad to deal with the threat. The senior management's response was simple: they shut down Operation Lucy, apparently nervous that they would be accused of racism if they continued to target the black gangsters.

A new Yardie squad composed of Customs and police was formed in 1990. By August it was killed off, the victim of weak senior management and hopeless bickering between the two groups. August 1991 saw the launch of Operation Dalehouse under Detective Superintendent John Jones. It seized more than $1.5 million worth of crack from Yardies and made 274 arrests, often for attacks on black victims. In November 1992 it, too, was killed off. John Jones feared that part of the problem was that black victims of crime attracted little press attention and, therefore, tempted the policy-makers at Scotland Yard to ignore them. And all the time that the generals at Scotland Yard were ordering their footsoldiers to retreat, there were more Yardies flowing into London: using a red-hot iron on a rebellious woman courier; strangling a senior official from the US embassy to stop her exposing a phoney visa racket; shooting police officers; running prostitutes and extortion rackets; and pushing millions of dollars worth of crack cocaine on to the streets.

A report for the National Criminal Intelligence Service last year referred to "the enormity of the problem within London" and traced Yardies to cities all over the country, adding: "Police in the outlying areas surrounding these cities, such as Cheltenham in the West, Wolverhampton in the Midlands and Luton in the South are all reporting problems of drug-related violence." The intelligence report ended on a startling note: "By the very nature of their stranglehold on the crack cocaine market, they are a threat to the security and stability of the nation."


Marcia's murderer: Delroy Denton, a known dangerous criminal who was living illegally in Britain under the protection of police

IN THE spring of 1993, one of the most experienced detectives in London got his hands on the problem. Detective Chief Superintendent Roy Clark (who has since been promoted to Deputy Assistant Commissioner) produced a confidential report that was a devastating exposé of the Yard's behaviour.

Clark found a hard core of half-a-dozen detectives and immigration officers who were still trying to tackle the Yardies. They had no office and no facilities and were reduced to using the bar of a small pub in Southwark in southeast London where, masked by the sound of the television and the babble of after-work drinkers, they swapped intelligence and tried to cobble together a strategy. This makeshift office was so well used that they referred to it as "the annexe" and even installed a fax machine behind the bar, where the landlord periodically tripped over it. Clarke found officers had been forced to spend their own money to fund operations.

In Jamaica, he found the two drug liaison officers at the British high commission pleading for a Polaroid camera so they could fax pictures of suspected Yardies to London and have them stopped at the airport; the Foreign Office had refused to pay up. He found Yardie intelligence was scattered through at least eight different squads, some of them defunct. He came across corruption in the Jamaican police force and among senior Jamaican politicians and heard of $33 million in US aid that had been stolen by politicians for Yardie gangs. He found Yardies cruising through British airports with false papers, occasionally being expelled only to come straight back again within weeks on new papers.

On one occasion, one of the Yardie's foremost killers, known as Tuffy, was stopped by immigration officers at Birmingham airport and simply barged his way past them, ran through the terminal and disappeared. He was later shot dead in south London by other Yardies.

Roy Clark's conclusion was damning. "There has been", he wrote, "an almost complete breakdown of the Metropolitan police strategic response and of the formal intelligence gathering and development structure." He made 35 recommendations for London to rebuild its defences against the Jamaican gangs, and he warned: "It has been made abundantly clear by all I have spoken to that unless there is a consistent, aggressive and long-term strategy to deal with Jamaican criminals in London, there will be ever and sharply increasing incidents of murder, violence, drug-related crime and crack availability." He added pointedly that one of the reasons why London had become a magnet for Yardies was that "they see the police as less of a threat than elsewhere".

Things had been bad. Now, despite Roy Clark's efforts, they stayed bad. One of Clark's most imaginative proposals was that a Yardie informer named Eaton Green should be flown out of London to Jamaica so that he could spend a month gathering intelligence in Kingston. Clark had no way of knowing that Green was already running out of control, manipulating his handlers in Brixton and routinely breaking the law. On July 8, 1993, only two days after Clark signed his report, Green was arrested by detectives from Nottingham, charged with the biggest armed robbery in the history of the city and sent to prison.

The policy-makers at Scotland Yard then side-lined a substantial number of Clark's 35 recommendations. Although they accepted his main point and set up a new unit to attack the Yardies, discreetly named the Drug Related Violence Intelligence Unit to avoid triggering complaints of racism, they starved it of power and leadership.

It was based within Scotland Yard's intelligence department, SO11, but its front-line specialist was a constable from Brixton, Steve Barker, known on the streets as John Wayne. He had never qualified as a detective, he had stumbled into the Yardies and he was now left to tackle this enemy with the minimum of supervision and support. He was to liaise with an immigration enforcement officer, a gritty Scot named Brian Fotheringham, who had no specialist training, no police powers, no firearms, no surveillance equipment, no interview rooms, no back-up and virtually no money. The new unit opened in August 1993. Within weeks, it had run into trouble.

On a trip to Jamaica in the summer of 1993, Constable Barker had been introduced to a professional man who was respected by the Yardies and who had spied on them for the American Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms. Barker suggested that that this man should visit London where he could infiltrate the capital's Yardies and produce a detailed report. The new unit accepted the plan and code-named him Andrew Gold. The problems began immediately.

The Yard's senior management saw Gold as an intelligence agent who would work to their agenda. They had not realised that he was a Yardie in his own right, a drug-dealer and a killer who had hired himself out as an assassin to corrupt Jamaican politicians. Nor did they realise that he was a con-man and that his career as an informer for the Americans had ended in scandal when he was caught trying to claim reward money for phoney information.

Soon after Gold arrived in London, some of them discovered the truth when, by sheer chance, Gold's American handler — a Miami drugs investigator named J J Waterson — walked into a yuppie pub in London's docklands and found his disgraced informer playing pool with detectives from Scotland Yard. Waterson was shocked: "It was almost as though he was another one of the boys — as if he was a police officer

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'Squeal deal' thugs on the loose

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and not an informer." Waterson was even more shocked when he discovered that Gold was living a life of indulgence, driving around in a VW Golf GTI, eating expensive meals, drinking fine wines, playing golf, making endless transatlantic phone calls and sleeping in a luxury furnished flat with a view of the Thames — all supplied at the British taxpayer's expense.

Furthermore, as Waterson subsequently discovered, Gold had entered the United Kingdom with a set of illegal papers in his suitcase. This had evidently involved very little risk since it transpired that SO11 had sent officers to the airport to wave him through passport control without hassle. And, in return for these privileges, Gold was providing no intelligence at all.

HE COMPLAINED to Waterson that Scotland Yard kept changing their minds about what they wanted him to do: first they had said he should simply hang out with the Yardies and produce a report; then they had asked him to set up a drugs importation, but operational detectives had pointed out that British law would not allow Gold to set up deals as he had in the US; finally, they had asked him to buy some guns from a notorious arms dealer in south London, but the deal had fallen through. Waterson says he warned Gold's handlers that "he was a slimy bastard and couldn't be trusted". Gold simply carried on enjoying himself for the best part of four months.

Before Gold finally went home, in January 1994, he produced a report on the Yardies in London which contained no usable new intelligence. He then flew back to Jamaica with a cash bonus in his pocket, leaving behind him a bill for the taxpayer of more than $45,000. Later, he boasted to friends in Jamaica that he discovered he had accidentally left his false passport behind in London — but, he claimed, the Metropolitan Police had kindly sent the illegal paperwork on to him by post.

In December 1993, there was an outcry after an entire plane-load of 323 Jamaicans was detained at Gatwick Airport and screened by police and immigration officers. Dozens were held overnight and 27 passengers were eventually deported to Jamaica on Christmas Day. The Government was bombarded with complaints that Jamaicans were being targeted in a racist way. However, a Home Office minister, Charles Wardle, insisted that the plane had not been targeted at all. "There was no picking on any flight," he said. "It is a routine matter." The Prime Minister, John Major, similarly wrote to the Labour MP Max Madden to assure him that the Jamaican plane had not been singled out. But this was not true. The Home Office minister and the Prime Minister had been misled.

The whole operation was run by the new unit at SO11, who had deliberately targeted the flight and brought along Fotheringham's boss to help them look for Yardie suspects. The operation had been planned in advance: a lounge had been set aside to process the passengers and a supply of biscuits and water had been laid on. They had done the same thing to another Jamaican flight a week earlier. The operation was hopelessly clumsy, and somebody somewhere found it easier to mislead Government ministers than to admit the truth.

On May 12, 1994, police raided the Atlantic pub in Brixton. Fotheringham was in the background of the raid looking for illegal Yardies and he became suspicious of a slim, young Jamaican who had been found in possession of a knife and who said he was a British national called Clive Lloyd Johnson. Fotheringham had come across that name before being falsely used by other Yardies. He advised the police not to release the man on bail, traced the real Clive Johnson and the next day he went back to the police station to interview the impostor.

The man put up a good verbal fight, offering two further false identities before finally admitting that his real name was Delroy Denton, then aged 33, known on the streets as Epsi; that he had served prison sentences in Jamaica for firearms and armed robbery; and that in April 1994 he had lied his way into the UK on one false name and had since been signing on for social security in another.

Now Fotheringham recognised him. He had seen Denton's name in police intelligence reports which described him as a murderous participant in street wars, the founder of a Kingston gang known as the Rapid Possee. When Denton then claimed that his life was in danger from corrupt politicians in Jamaica and applied for political asylum, Fotheringham knew exactly what he had to do.

He immediately wrote a file note: "We need long-term detention (secure) on this one." He then filled in a standard form to give reasons for the detention: "Subject dangerous Jamaican criminal, given 16 years in Jamaica for firearms/aggravated burglary offences. Entered on false ID. Has been claiming in yet another false ID. Very dangerous individual." To stress his point, he underlined the word "very" and


Brian Fotheringham: immigration official who recommended Green should have UK residence rights

then completed a special Exceptional Risk Form to warn the Metropolitan Police of the presence in London of this unusually dangerous man. On this form, he ticked two boxes to record his view of Denton's character: "He is associated with a dangerous gang" and "He is of an extremely violent nature". Denton might buy himself a short stay in Britain with his asylum application, but Fotheringham would ensure that he spent the time behind bars. Then an odd thing happened.

Fotheringham had a conversation with Barker from SO11. The next day, May 14, he wrote a new file note, in which he completely reversed his position. There was, he wrote, "no realistic chance of long-term detention on this man". Furthermore, he suggested, Denton was no longer dangerous: "PC Barker has stated intelligence has shown that subject has not been involved in any serious criminal matters since being here." The notes did not explain how PC Barker reconciled this opinion with his knowledge of Denton's history in Jamaica.

And there was one other thing which the notes did not record: on that day, Denton had agreed to become an informer. If Fotheringham stuck to his plan to detain him, he and Barker would gain nothing from him. That night, this "very dangerous individual" was allowed to walk out of custody, back on to the streets of London.

The Home Office started to investigate Denton's application for asylum. Four months later, on September 13, Mrs B McDermott of the asylum section produced a detailed memo listing the reasons for refusing it; a second official added a hand-written note that this was "a particularly weak claim". In December, they produced a formal letter for Denton, telling him he had been rejected, and they sent it to Fotheringham's section so that it could be served on Denton, clearing the way for him to be deported.

Then another odd thing happened. The letter simply stayed in the file. That same month, on December 19, 1994, a south London woman called the local police to report that her daughter, a 15-year-old convent school girl, had been raped. The girl described how she and three friends used to laugh with a man who sometimes saw them at the bus stop on their way home from school and that day, they had decided to skip school and go round to his flat. They had drunk some wine and smoked a joint and she had fallen asleep. Her friends had gone off and she had woken up to find this man forcing himself upon her. She had struggled and pleaded but she had been unable to stop him. His name was Delroy Denton.

When police went to his home, Denton ran, but he was caught and charged with rape and remanded in custody. Six weeks later, on February 1, 1995, the Crown Prosecution Service dropped the rape charge on grounds of insufficient evidence and declined to prosecute him for having sex with an under-aged girl because she was not a virgin and, therefore, could not be said to have been corrupted. Denton went back to the streets of London.

Three and a half months later, he was still free, carrying the mobile phone that Scotland Yard had bought for him, spending the weekly cash allowance which they gave him, signing on without declaring the money, smoking dope and crack, contacting Barker from time to time to feed him information about his friends. The letter from the Home Office was still lying in a file in Fotheringham's section.

And then, one April morning, Denton talked his way into Marcia Lawes's flat and raped her and stabbed her over and over again, in the neck and chest and shoulders, until she lay dead on the floor of her hallway.

It did not take the detectives from the Number Five Area Major Investigation Pool very long to catch him. They questioned all of Marcia's friends and took blood samples from men who knew her to match the DNA against the semen on her body. On May 9, they questioned Denton. On June 28, they arrested him. On June 29, they charged him with murder. Three months later, on October 29, 1995, the Crown Prosecution Service dropped the charge on the grounds that, in the opinion of senior Treasury counsel, there was insufficient evidence.

The Amip (Area Major Investigation Pool) detectives who had investigated the rape were alarmed to see him walk free. They knew he was an illegal immigrant and that his application for asylum had been refused by the Home Office, so they contacted Fotheringham and asked him to have Denton detained. Fotheringham refused. The Home Office letter remained in its file. Denton remained on the streets. The Amip detectives also knew that Denton was working for SO11 and so they contacted Barker's senior officers and advised that Denton should no longer be used as a registered informer. Denton was struck off the register — but nevertheless, with SO11's knowledge, PC Barker continued to meet him and to use him as a source of intelligence.

For two months Denton continued his old life, using and dealing crack cocaine and grass, stealing and, on one occasion, attempting to rape a young girl called Debbie. However, he was unaware that the Amip detectives were still working on him and, on December 23, 1995, they arrested him once more. This time, they had extra evidence. In July 1996, he was jailed for life. The Home Office letter never was served on him.

An immigration source who knows Fotheringham's work admits that Denton's treatment was part of a pattern: "There was an unwritten policy of co-operation between the police and the immigration service. We rely on the police for our existence. We want police to make our arrests, we want police cells to hold people in custody, we need police interview rooms and vehicles. In return, there are certain things that go on. Fotheringham was trying to improve the relationship by doing favours. He was in an impossible position: as an enforcement officer he had to throw these people out, but as an informant handler he had to protect them to keep a good relationship with them."

TWO months before Denton was finally locked up, Scotland Yard reviewed the risk of embarrassment from their Yardie informers and wrote to the immigration department claiming that they had no objection to Denton's removal. By that time, Fotheringham had left the department. No one in the Home Office acted on Scotland Yard's letter and SO11 continued to use Denton.

Barker's most productive informer, Eaton Green, was allowed to stay in the UK even though he had jumped bail in Jamaica where he was due to face trial for attempted murder. On Fotheringham's advice, he was given residence rights because he had married a British national; Fotheringham accepted that Green had fathered the woman's child even though his name did not appear on the birth certificate and the woman had apparently been pregnant for four months before she first met Green.

Fotheringham subsequently explained that he had not checked the birth records but believed that the baby "looked" just like Green". Green went on to engage in a spectacular sequence of crimes on the streets of London, culminating in his jailing for a major armed robbery in Nottingham. Green was allowed to import two Yardie friends from Jamaica, Cecil Thomas and Rohan "Bumpy" Thomas, who had a history of shooting policemen. It was disclosed 18 months ago that on March 28, 1993, the two men were allowed to enter the country even though Bumpy was travelling on a false passport and both men had long criminal records.

Soon after Green was finally jailed in October 1995 for the armed robbery in Nottingham, SO11 moved him into a safe house, where he confessed to a startling catalogue of crime in the UK. Dealing with his time in Jamaica, he described in detail numerous armed robberies and shootings and, in particular, how he had murdered 11


Steve Barker: Brixton officer who knew Green had jumped bail on a murder charge in Jamaica

people. Confronted with this, Scotland Yard once more bent the law. They failed to tell Interpol or the Jamaican authorities of his confessions to murder; they failed to set up a team to link his confessions to reported UK crimes; they failed to pass a report to the Crown Prosecution Service; indeed, they had failed during the weeks of his confession even to caution him, the essential legal prerequisite for using any of his admissions in evidence against him. Instead, Scotland Yard contacted the Parole Board and the Immigration Department to try to arrange for this multiple killer to be given early parole and to be allowed to remain in the UK.

In the meantime, Green has since told friends, they paid him a reward and, in an attempt to re-establish his credibility in Jamaica, they used public funds to send a series of bribes to a corrupt police officer in Kingston.

Once again, all SO11's plans collapsed in disarray. The outline of Green's confession was leaked to the Guardian; the Home Office then refused to give him parole and ordered his eventual deportation. Since then, we have done what Scotland Yard should have done and checked his confession in Jamaica: it turns out that chunks of it are fiction, an apparent attempt to increase his status with the Yard.

In October 1995, Green's wife gave birth to another child. Green says he is the father and his name appears on the child's birth certificate. If true, this would mean he fathered the child while he was behind bars. He has not explained whether this, too, was part of the deal.

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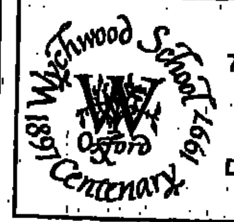
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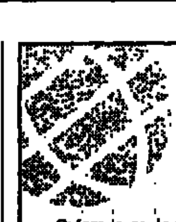
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HOTELS & APPARTMENTS

Swanning out of the Ballet

THE Royal Ballet suffered a blow to its prestige last week when one of its leading dancers announced that he was leaving to fulfil an engagement in the United States with a small north London-based company, *writes Dan Glaister*.

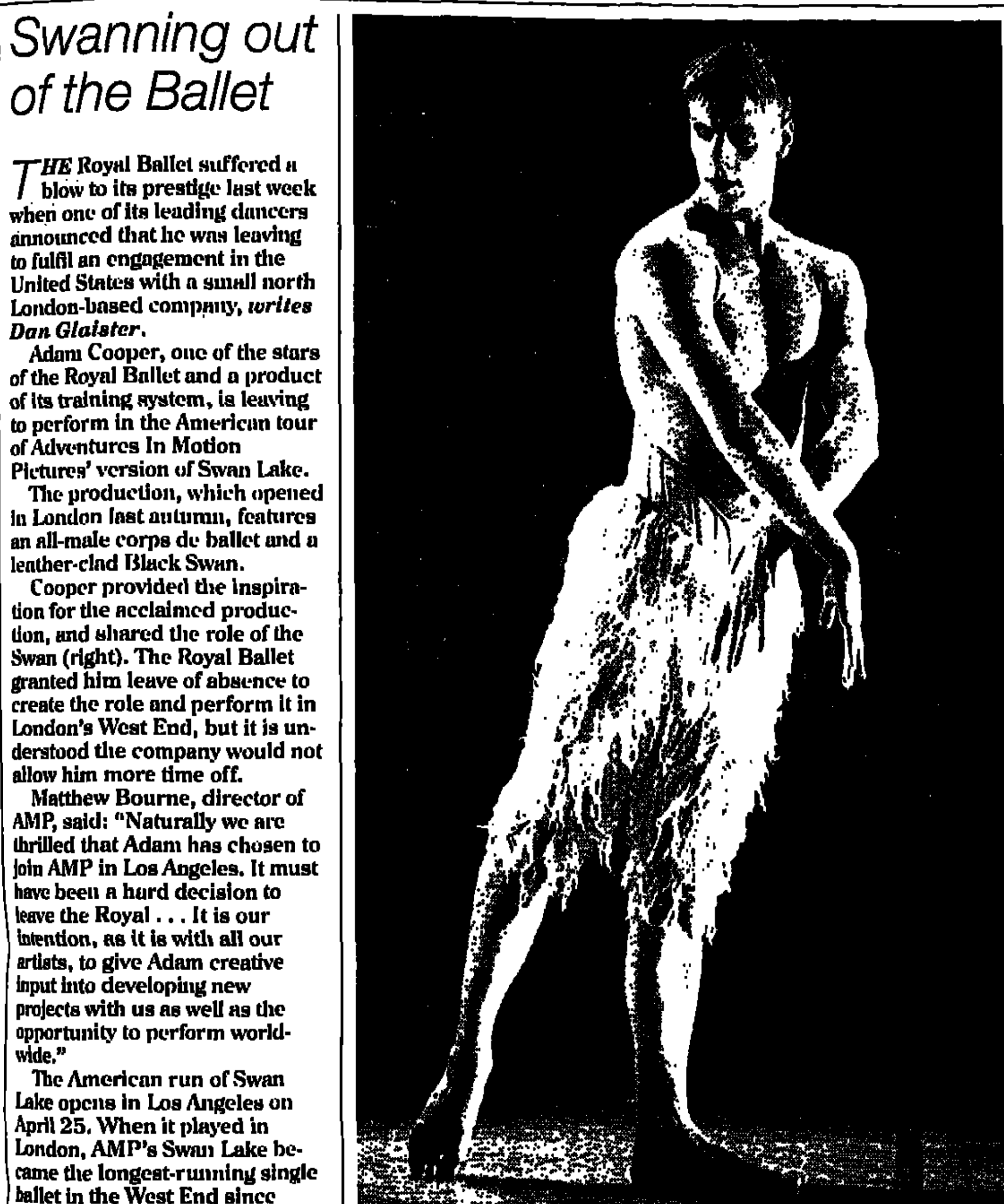
Adam Cooper, one of the stars of the Royal Ballet and a product of its training system, is leaving to perform in the American tour of Adventures In Motion Pictures' version of Swan Lake.

The production, which opened in London last autumn, features an all-male corps de ballet and a leather-clad Black Swan.

Cooper provided the inspiration for the acclaimed production, and shared the role of the Swan (right). The Royal Ballet granted him leave of absence to create the role and perform it in London's West End, but it is understood the company would not allow him more time off.

Matthew Bourne, director of AMP, said: "Naturally we are thrilled that Adam has chosen to join AMP in Los Angeles. It must have been a hard decision to leave the Royal . . . It is our intention, as it is with all our artists, to give Adam creative input into developing new projects with us as well as the opportunity to perform worldwide."

The American run of Swan Lake opens in Los Angeles on April 25. When it played in London, AMP's Swan Lake became the longest-running single ballet in the West End since Diaghilev's 1921 version of The Sleeping Prince.



PHOTOGRAPH: HENRIETTA BUTLER

Master drummer of jazz

OBITUARY
Tony Williams

PLENTY of drummers have made names for themselves out of the musical equivalent of juggling with flaming torches, but very few have won respect for a sound as eloquent as a horn or a voice, for galvanising musicians to play above themselves, for creating climates within which individual and ensemble invention can flourish. Tony Williams, the percussion virtuoso, bandleader and composer, who has died aged 51, was one of those. The revolution in jazz percussion over the past half-century has been so inventive and audacious as to change fundamentally the way other musicians shape their phrasing, and Williams was a towering influence over it for much of that time.

A phenomenal dexterity, speed of thought and independence of limb gave Williams a technique that he put almost entirely to musical rather than showbiz ends. He adapted the tradition established by bop master-drummer Max Roach, whereby "the beat" was no longer invariably traceable to an explicit pattern on one part of the kit, but became the undercurrent of a fluid and ambiguous rhythmic continuum. He would also closely shadow front-line instruments and echo their melodic patterns, an insight so widely copied as to eventually become a cliché of the jazz-fusion movement.

Williams came to resemble a miniaturised version of the African drum choir that lies deep within the sources of jazz, layers of rhythm pulling and nudging each other to create tempo patterns as intricate and absorbing as western melody. The Rolling Stones drummer Charlie Watts once described Tony Williams's cymbal beat as "an instrument in itself", and the combined impact with his other three limbs was as near to orchestral as a drummer can get. No tempo could faze him, and he would maintain his uncanny lightness of touch and variety of light and shade even through the fastest, most intense of passages.

By the time he was 15, Williams had already played alongside Art Blakey and Max Roach, the leading jazz percussionists of the day.

In 1962, he joined saxophonist Jackie McLean, one of the most creative of post-Charlie Parker alto players. Through McLean, Williams came to New York, and by the following year was playing with Miles Davis, a turning-point in his life.

As for many gifted young players, the Miles Davis band was a musical hothouse that focused Williams's talents and rapidly developed his sense of group interplay. But it wasn't a one-way stretch. Williams and the pianist Herbie Hancock would later recount how Davis had deliberately recruited a young band in the early sixties — both to maximise the sense of surprise and risk, and to bridge the worlds of jazz, soul and funk — but that at the outset it was Davis himself who was at sea, struggling to bring his rhythmic syntax into line with players half his age who had grown up with very different influences to his.

But Davis learned quickly and also showed his young partners the virtues of dynamics and surprise; the quintet he led, featuring the saxophonist Wayne Shorter along with Hancock, Williams and the bassist Ron Carter, was later recognised as having been one of the great jazz groups of all time.

In 1969, Williams formed Lifetime, one of the first and most distinctive of fusion bands, a loud, rugged, and blues-tinged trio (with organist Larry Young and British guitarist John McLaughlin) that was never a big hit with the public but showed that this kind of jazz could remain innovative and improvisationally challenging.

After Lifetime's demise, Williams studied composition, came back to playing toward the end of the seventies with the VSOP band, and made a series of recordings that suggested that the Davis quintet of which he had been so significant a part represented the jazz sound that engaged him most. During the nineties, Williams's composing interests took him toward classical music, and he wrote for the Kronos Quartet among others.

John Fordham

Tony Williams, jazz musician, born December 12, 1945; died February 23, 1997

Maiden in England

CINEMA
Derek Malcolm

IT WAS always difficult to see how Jane Campion could trump the ace of The Piano. The Portrait of a Lady, based on the Henry James novel but retold by a woman film-maker with rather different concerns, looks very unlikely to match its success.

That does not make it an artistic failure. And it isn't, if you remember its difficult literary source. This is distinguished film-making, missing the almost melodramatic passion of The Piano but still proving that Campion is one of the world's leading directors.

It is tempting to say it has the same place in Campion's work as The Age Of Innocence in that of Martin Scorsese. But whereas Scorsese changed pace entirely, making much of the surface period glitter in his adaptation of Edith Wharton's novel, Campion sketches in the period detail and then attempts to get further inside her characters. In particular, she examines Isabel Archer, the American in England who says she will never get married but allows herself to be trapped into wedlock by a man who seems to be her match but is still unworthy of her. The examination occurs in minute detail over a long film and Nicole Kidman carries it off surprisingly well.

Surprisingly, not because she is an actress of small range — she proved otherwise in To Die For — but because she does not seem ideally cast. Her Isabel is not a weak vessel into which John Malkovich's odious Osmond pours his poison, but a woman struggling, despite her essential fragility, to assert her independence.

But in portraying the chilly realities of Isabel's world, comforted by worthier men but assailed by a conspiracy, orchestrated by Barbara Hershey's Madame Serena, which brings her down, Campion has somehow failed to capture the warmth of Isabel's character. What is substituted for the Jamesian prose, the glory of the novel, is something less holding — a picture of a society which encloses its characters in a web of hypocrisy.

The film starts uncertainly with contemporary Australian girls talking with open confidence about their passions, and declares itself, rather self-consciously, as more than Jamesian. But it soon makes sure we know that Isabel is a woman from another era who could be half in love with the pain she causes herself.

Thereafter the film's evenly paced progress, through an examination of the affections of others for Isabel and finally of her shock at discovering Osmond's sadistic nature, does have longueurs. But it always focuses properly on Isabel's internal state, even if we are not allowed to see some of the vital moments of her life.

Kidman is more than adequate, and no one could have done much better with Madame Merle than Hershey, but there are inevitably doubts about Malkovich.

He carries the baggage of portentous romantic parts, including his charming villain in Dangerous Liaisons. But he is no longer able to convince us that even the slightly masochistic Isabel would fall for his wiles, and he is only really convincing when the mask finally slips.

A well-known French critic, viewing Tim Burton's **Mars Attacks!** at the Berlin Film Festival, proclaimed it a masterpiece of political film-making, even if the director was unaware of it. As a blast against the inanities of the patriotic, ridiculously feel-good Independence Day, it does appear more than just a MAD magazine parody, full of references to fifties B-movies.

But it is never quite funny or sharp enough for such claims to be made safely. Perhaps this is why it failed in America, but it is more likely that its portrait of the US as the world's greatest but tackiest power, intentional or not, irritated film-goers who want comforting Gumpian certainties.

If you recount the film's best moments, it sounds like a treasure. The Martians defeat everything Jack Nicholson's television-obsessed president throws at them, including a loquacious paraphrase of Rodney King's "Why can't we get along?" plea. But Slim Whitman's Indian Love Call, summoned up on record by an aged grandmother, makes their heads explode with its banality. (A Martian greeting is interpreted as OK since it looks like the universal sign of the doughnut.) When the jokes are good, they are very good indeed.

But Burton, though technically little short of a master, prefers to give us a different kind of chuckle as we watch his brilliantly engineered pastiches. This is a very clever film whose first hour flashes by in what seems like half the time. But it doesn't match Edward Scissorhands for style and thoughtful irony nor Ed Wood for its affectionate view of American inanity. And it is too jokey to disturb.

Even so, the élan with which it is made, and the comic attack of Nicholson, Danny DeVito, Glenn Close, Pierce Brosnan, Martin Short and even Tom Jones are compensations.

NICHOLAS HYTNER'S **The Crucible** is Arthur Miller's adaptation of his famous play, set in Salem, Massachusetts in 1692. The play was drawn from history — which the film constantly drums home. It is little changed, though Abigail (Winona Rider) is painted more sympathetically as a lovelorn young girl, obsessed with a married man (Daniel Day-Lewis) whose accusations of witchcraft shatter the community.

There are now no McCarthyite witchhunts to measure it against. But there are other kinds of hysteria, and The Crucible, while allowing us the luxury of looking back in anger, also forces us to query the present.

But it's the acting that counts and this effectively covers the occasionally weak logic of the story. Day-Lewis's Proctor, attempting to divest himself of his guilty love, is intense and convincing. Rider, though not his equal, gives a very decent summation of perverted innocence, and Paul Scofield as the Rev allows us to feel that, according to his lights, Christ is with him. The best performance is by Joan Allen as Proctor's riven wife (rewarded with an Oscar nomination); stunning acting which alone would make the film memorable.

Hytner orchestrates the madness with disciplined abandon, as if the inevitability of the tragedy is unquestionable. So the film has few genuine surprises, and remains a little on one note — although a powerful note.

Exploit the workers? Yes, peas!

TELEVISION
Nancy Banks-Smith

THE beauty of mange tout peas is they don't roll off your knife. This makes them popular at smart dinner parties. *Mange Tout* (Modern Times BBC2), a documentary on the Man from Del Monte theme, was a runaway winner from the moment Blessing, a foreman on the pea farm, drew an outline of Africa in the lion-coloured earth and wrote Tesco above it like the name of some fabled, undiscovered country. "I've never been there but I have the imagination of it. I take it to be quite superior, quite magnificent."

This is an impression Mark Dady, Tesco's veg buyer, is happy to cultivate.

Mange tout, said Mark, is a new product *vis-à-vis* the banana. There is a huge market out there for mange tout if only people could be persuaded to eat the stuff. Every year he and his retinue visit the Zimbabwe farm (at the farmer's expense) to urge him on. "I want to be convinced of his on-going loyalty and commitment. If there's only one mange tout in Zimbabwe I want to be sure he puts a Tesco label on it."

The labourers bent over the mange tout. Mange tout must not bend over. Tesco want them straight and identical like green sardines. Blessing (the names alone are worth the price of admission) held a curved pod and a straight one. "We treat them like children, this one is a sick child. This one a healthy child. What we aim for is this good child."

The language of the workers was extraordinarily vivid. Imagery came to them like breathing. Blessing always spoke of Tesco in terms of a visiting royalty. The Queen would have recognised the form. The VIPs sitting in the dappled shade, the Tesco flag, the drumming, the dancing. The song of welcome: "Up the mountain, down the valley, Tesco is our dear friend." The speech of praise: "Chiparawe peas! What a delicious meal! All people enjoy eating peas and beans."

This was more tactful than true. Local people don't like mange tout. Every week four tons, which fall short of Tesco's exacting standards, are fed to cows, who seemed to appreciate them. So do caterpillars. Grannie (who is, as it happens, young and beautiful) is a caterpillar picker. Mark Phillips, the producer and director, must be a sympathetic listener. The workers talked to him with moving candour.

When she was 17, Grannie gave birth to a daughter, Memory. "What my father decided was to kill me because I had spoiled my life. He was preparing me to go to agricultural college. He had already paid money for me to go. It was not refundable. He was very, very angry. He said, 'You must not come to this place again.' "

When her husband went to jail, Grannie wanted to kill herself anyway. This time her mother intervened. "She told me not to do that. She said, 'We're here to help you. What will Memory do when you are dead and she doesn't know her father? Find a job and save money for your kid for her to have a better life than what you did.'"

So she kills caterpillars for a living. "I'm doing it for the children like a soldier going to a war, not wanting to fight. I remember when I was at school and life was running like water but now it's too hard, like grinding meal. If you want to become a king you must work like a slave."

What a story and what a prose style. Grannie is a writer.

Blessing is ambitious. He said, "One day I must be going around with the king, checking whatever is there, condemning whatever he doesn't want. That's a dream but a dream that you can dream waking. That can be done by a man. I am a man."

The short and simple annals of the poor were intercut with a champagne-fuelled dinner party in Basingstoke, arguing over the cooling mange tout.

Tesco will be pleased at the number of times their name occurs, coupled deservedly with words like quality, freshness and value. However, a documentary is not, like the man from Del Monte, a commercial.

Mange tout pickers earn about a penny for the 150-gram pack that Tesco sells for 99p. "Crikey," said Mark, "We're not a charity." Before this visit they were paid for every pea they picked. Tesco recommended an improvement. Only perfect peas should be picked and paid for. Some of the workers realised their wages would be significantly reduced. They struck.

Gender bender

THEATRE
Michael Billington

KATHRYN HUNTER is not the first woman to play **King Lear** — a German actress in her 70s recently had a crack at the title. But I know of no one else in Britain who has crashed this particular gender-barrier, and Hunter brings to the role her acumen, intelligence and authority.

My doubts spring from the frame director Helena Kaut-Howson has chosen for this undeniably provocative Leicester Haymarket production. It starts in what might be a nursing home or even a psychiatric institution. A white-maned, wheelchaired old woman, with a tartan-capped friend at her feet, sits watching the TV from which the opening lines of King Lear suddenly emerge (fat chance these days).

But, as the woman has a violent heart attack, alarm bells ring, screens are rushed in, daughters and staff gather. When the screens part, the ailing patient is transmogrified into a dark-suited, spade-bearded Lear enthroned on a hospital trolley with the family and medics caught up in the world of Shakespeare's play. What we are witnessing is King Lear as a dying woman's fantasy in which all her thoughts about filial ingratitude, earthly injustice and cosmic cruelty are expressed through Shakespeare's fable. It is an original concept but one that goes right against the Shakespearean grain.

One clue to Shakespeare's genius, as Harold Bloom points out in The Western Canon, is his disinterestedness, his refusal to peddle a specific ideology, theology or metaphysics. Lear, in particular, gains — as Peter Brook famously showed in 1962 — when staged with absolute moral neutrality: when Goneril and Regan are seen objectively rather than from their father's viewpoint. But if the whole play, as here, is a private dream, then everyone becomes a projection of the protagonist's imagination. Kaut-Howson's concept also offers a needless justification for the fact that Lear is played by a woman; but Hunter's performance is strong enough not to demand any framing apologia.

She brings to the role extraordinary physical and vocal precision, her movements exude a stick-wielding testiness, her dry, sandpaper tones enunciate every syllable. She also knocks on the head James Agate's idea that Lear must be an outsize figure who should "look as though he had stepped out of a canvas by Michelangelo or a drawing by Blake". If she is infinitely better in the play's later stages, it is because early on she is imprisoned by the concept rather than by gender. There are nice touches when she cuts up the map of England with a pair of scissors or does a soft-shoe shuffle with Marcello Magni's Fool.

But Lear's cruelty, rage and absolutism are inevitably diminished if he is the hero of a private dream: he may be more "sinned against than sinning" but it is still he who provokes the crisis.

Lear's tyranny is short-changed. But Hunter comes into her own in the storm scene: "Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks!" is for once delivered in near-silence with the elements gradually introduced like instruments in an orchestra.

It is a good, often very moving performance that makes a persuasive case for gender-blind casting. But the production is a mixed bag. The staging itself is impressive, but it is with a certain irritation that one returns at the end to the nursing home concept as if the whole play were a piece of therapy rather than a dramatic myth.

But the real argument against Kaut-Howson's concept is that it attempts to make sense of a play whose particular glory is that it is senseless. Instead of a moral confusion, in which good and evil are violently juxtaposed and alternative viewpoints collide, we get a rational explanation.

Dr Johnson called **Cymbeline** a tale of "unresisting imbecility". He was wrong. Yet, in the theatre, its fusion of Holinshed, Boccaccio and folk tale, its geographical shifts and outrageous plot invariably cast their own transfixing spell.

A problem remains, however: how do you give unity to an experimental late romance full of disparate ingredients? Peter Hall treated it as pure fairy tale, William Gaskill as Brechtian fable. Adrian Noble's answer, in his new Stratford-upon-Avon production designed by Anthony Ward, is to give it the look and style of Japanese kabuki; and the result is light, graceful and witty even if one sometimes feels that the magic is being imposed.



Marcello Magni (the Fool) and Kathryn Hunter (Lear) PHOTO: NEIL LIBBERT

Ward has certainly transformed the Royal Shakespeare Theatre's space. A long Japanese hanamichi, rather like a fashion show catwalk, extends from the stage to the rear of the stalls: all night actors hurtle past you, and you even sense the whiff and wind of their fell swords. The stage itself, which has a burnished brown surface, is dominated by a billowing white cloth that rises and falls like a ship's sail.

And, while the actors sport knotted headpieces and pigtails, the costumes have the bright-coloured bagginess of kabuki.

Stratford's legendary Japanese tourists should certainly feel at home.

The concept binds together an eclectic story and also yields two outstanding performances. Joanne Pearce's Imogen, cruelly separated from her husband, is no Pollyanna paragon but a woman of passion and giddy excitement: her initial reaction on awaking next to a headless corpse she assumes to be that of her husband is to bathe herself in its blood. The headless corpse belongs, of course, to the Queen's son, Cloten, who is played brilliantly by Guy Henry as a rangy paranoid.

My only cavil is that, having started as kabuki, the production finally resorts to stock RSC devices (a gold-masked Jupiter ascends on a hydraulic platform), and that the famously knotty climax is imbued with comic irony rather than a sense of wonder.

Dazzling Carmen

OPERA
Tim Ashley

THE moment the curtain rises on Welsh National Opera's new production of Carmen, the intentions of its directors — the French-Swiss team of Patrice Caurier and Moshe Leiser — are plain. Naff, picture-book stain is conspicuous by its absence. The usual milling crowds of extras are nowhere in sight.

Instead, propping themselves against the dark, smudgy walls of Christian Fenouillat's austere set, a group of sweaty soldiers, macho bullies to a man, leers provocatively at the audience.

Within minutes, both tone and theme are fully established. Micaela's entrance is preceded by an ugly wolf whistle and followed by a pointed threat of sexual assault. In short, all the deadly paraphernalia that has turned Carmen over the years into a musical holiday brochure — the teams of flamenco dancers, the endless parades of sequined matadors — have been stripped away. What we are left with is a disturbing study of the nature of desire.

Sara Fulgoni sings the title role with a gorgeous smoky tone and plays Carmen as a woman struggling to establish her own code of sexual conduct in a brutal masculine society. The reason for her initial attraction to John Daszak's José is his stillness, the fact that he's the only man who doesn't attempt to paw her the moment she appears. Yet Daszak's shy-looking, slightly gawky presence is deceptive. His first duet with Micaela reveals that his voice can change from silk to steel in a moment.

Bruno Caproni's suavely-sung Escamillo is Daszak's perfect foil, no preening braggart, but a world-weary cynic.

The central quartet is completed by Alwyn Mellor's glowing Micaela, intensely sung and revealing deep emotional strengths behind the ostensibly prudish façade. All four are stunning. This is one of WNO's finest achievements. Great performances of Carmen are few and far between. This belongs among them.

Spirit of resistance

OBITUARY
Andrei Sinyavsky

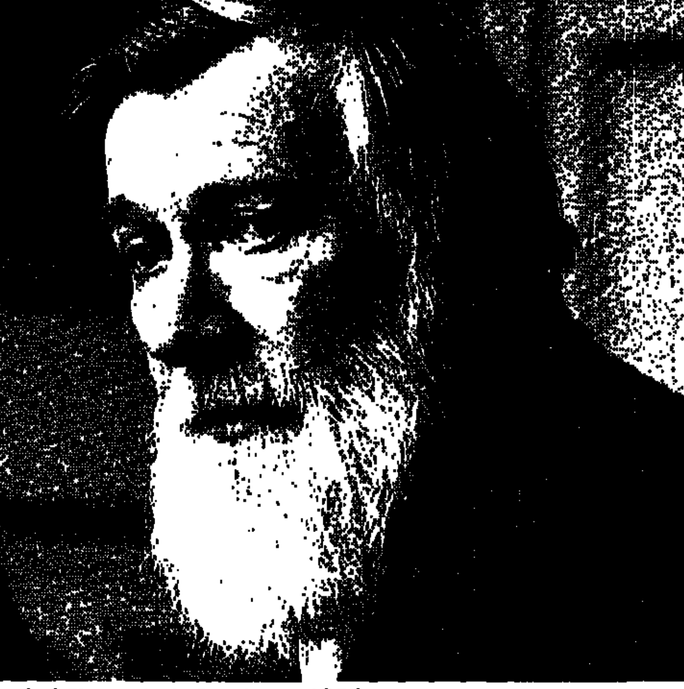
THE DEATH of Andrei Sinyavsky at the age of 71 deprives Russian literature of one of its most brilliant and protean practitioners. Sinyavsky had a strong philosophical bent and possessed one of the most original minds of his generation. Like one of his heroes, Vasily Rozanov, he ranged far and wide over the field of literature and was impatient with conventional genres. But he was greater than his hero. For he was not only a subtle and wide-ranging critic and a masterful essayist, but also a novelist and short story writer of extraordinary distinction. He stretched the boundaries of Russian prose and extended its possibilities for the writers who came after him. As one of the earliest and most prominent dissidents of the Soviet sixties, he also played a significant part in eroding the political authority of the communist regime.

At the conclusion of his celebrated epitaph for Soviet literature What Is Socialist Realism? (1959), Sinyavsky wrote that he placed his hopes for the future of literature in "a phantasmagoric art with hypotheses instead of a purpose and with grotesque instead of realistic descriptions of life", and he invoked the examples of Hoffmann, Dostoevsky and Chagall, and the spirit of "absurd fantasy", with which to exorcise the debased realism that dominated the official literary scene. Shortly afterwards he published a fantastic novella, The Trial Begins (1960), that not only fulfilled the prescriptions of this literary manifesto, but uncannily predicted — and helped to provoke — his own arrest and trial for anti-Soviet propaganda. He was himself, in many ways, a character out of Hoffmann or Dostoevsky.

Sinyavsky received his doctorate in Russian literature from Moscow university in 1952. As a member of the Gorky Institute of World Literature he began to teach and publish critical articles, including several for the three-volume History Of Soviet Literature published by the Academy of Sciences in the late fifties. In the early sixties he co-authored path-breaking studies of post-revolutionary Soviet poetry and (with Igor Golomshtok) the work of Picasso, and wrote a long introduction to a volume of poems by Pasternak that remains one of the classic essays on that difficult poet. He became a regular contributor to the leading Soviet literary journal, Novy Mir, and was singled out by its editor, Alexander Tvardovsky, as one of the most talented critics of the younger generation.

Meanwhile Sinyavsky had embarked on a venture of unprecedented daring in the context of the rigid censorship of the late Soviet era. Starting in 1959, he began publishing clandestinely in the West under the pseudonym of Abram Tertz (a name he later adopted for all his literary work). The first piece to appear was What Is Socialist Realism?, quickly followed by The Trial Begins, six "fantastic tales", a scintillating novel, Lyubimov (published in English as The Makepeace Experiment, 1965) and a short collection of iconoclastic aphorisms and meditations entitled Thoughts Unawares (1966).

The literary worlds of both East and West were abuzz with rumours about the real identity of Tertz. Soviet officials alleged that he was an impostor and an emigré, but in September 1965 they changed their tune with the announcement that Sinyavsky, together with his friend Yuli Daniel (who had also published in the West under the name of Nikolai Arzhak) had been arrested for anti-Soviet activities. Their four-day trial in February 1966 was a landmark in Soviet political history. It was the first time since the twenties that individuals had been openly tried for their opinions, and also the first time that defendants in a show trial had defied their judges and prosecutors.



Andrei Sinyavsky in London in 1984 PHOTOGRAPH: SUE ADLER

Sinyavsky was sentenced to seven years' hard labour, but the proceedings of the trial were published in samizdat in a "White Book" that set off a veritable explosion of underground publishing, which in turn fuelled the rapid growth of the Soviet dissident movement. A worldwide campaign of protest followed, leading, among other things, to the establishment of the British journal, Index on Censorship, to monitor violations of freedom of expression both in the Soviet Union and in other parts of the world.

Sinyavsky served five-and-a-half years of his sentence without incident and during that time, through the device of long letters to his wife, composed one of the most original works ever to appear on the labour camps, A Voice From The Chorus (1973). Simultaneously he made notes for two equally unconventional books of criticism, Strolls With Pushkin and In Gogol's Shadow, both of which had to wait several years for publication (1975 and 1978 respectively).

In 1973, not long after his release, Sinyavsky was allowed to emigrate to Paris, settling in a picturesque stone villa in the southern suburbs that became an island of Russian culture and a haven for devotees of Sinyavsky/Tertz. He was soon honoured with a position at the Sorbonne teaching Russian literature, and for a while collaborated with Vladimir Maximov on the flagship Russian emigré journal, Kontinent. They soon parted company, however, and in 1978, together with his wife, Maria Rozanova, Sinyavsky launched his own journal, Sintaksis, that continues to this day.

Once settled in emigration, Sinyavsky did not slacken his literary activities, although more time was taken up with polemics and political commentary than was perhaps ideal for his talent. It was unfortunate, in this regard, that his superb autobiographical novel, Goodnight, called forth a torrent of criticism and abuse from some of the people described in it, including associates of his early youth, and prevented the novel from being recognised as one of the few masterpieces of recent Russian prose. The resulting polemics also clouded his first return visit to Russia in 1989, and cast a shadow over the long overdue publication of his works in his homeland.

Sinyavsky was married to literature in a way that, given the extraordinary upheavals to which they were subjected, few authors of his generation were able to manage. The marriage lasted until his dying day, and although he continued to publish essays and articles, the best news is that he was working on a major new novel, and had completed at least the first draft, when illness finally overtook him. Let us hope that it is sufficiently polished to add lustre to a noble career.

Michael Scammell

Andrei Donatovich Sinyavsky, writer and critic, born October 8, 1925; died February 25, 1997

Memorable miniatures

Natasha Walter

Fugitive Pieces
by Anne Michaels
Bloomsbury 294pp £14.99

THIS novel is an extraordinary piece of work. Founded on great ambition and carried through fearlessly, it is a startling book for a young Canadian woman to produce as her debut. That's not to say the book always succeeds. It has its flaws. In fact, I think it's flawed right through, but that still makes it a flawed jewel rather than a perfect piece of plastic.

It's the tale of a Jewish boy, Jakob Beer, who escapes from wartime Poland in the arms of a good Greek man. The plot takes him first to Greece and then to Canada, where he becomes a poet, and then switches track to tell the last section through the eyes of a man who meets Beer just before he dies. That's the plot, but Anne Michaels isn't particularly interested in plot. She is interested in what she can find behind the plot, what she can hang on to the plot — images, ideas, language.

She's a poet, and her images often have the engraved, worked-upon beauty of a line of good poetry. Jakob remembers his mother, who was killed before his eyes: "My mother, after the decrees, turned away by a storekeeper, then dropping her scarf in the doorway, bending down to pick it up. In my mind, her whole life telescoped into that single moment, stooping again and again in her heavy blue coat." Stooping again and again in her heavy blue coat . . . this is a fine, memorable miniature. But when Jakob is thinking this, he is meant to be a seven-year-old child. Even as he runs from death, he sees that "the forest floor is speckled bronze, sugar caramelised in the leaves. The branches look painted onto the onion white sky." Beautiful — but a curiously still and frozen image for a boy on the run to realise.

This frozen quality affects the whole book. No doubt it is to some degree deliberate, a reflection of the mind of a man who has undergone the greatest traumas that the 20th century has to offer. But to create this quality of distance, Anne Michaels sacrifices any shiver of recognition, any shock of closeness. Particularly, it is odd to find a woman writing about women in such an abstract, romantic style. "I see in Michaela's face the goodness of Beatrice de Luna, the Marrano angel of Ferrara," Beer says of his wife.

"In Michaela's face, the loyalty of generations, perhaps the devotion of a hundred Kievan women for a hundred faithful husbands . . . In Michaela's eyes, ten generations of history, in her hair the scents of fields and pines." Who is this woman? Can Michaels really see this ideal, this goddess, or is she just trying to underline the excessive abstraction of her narrator? Even when the story switches to another narrator's voice, this static, curiously narrow view of women continues.

The new narrator, Ben, has a wife who "nourished my research", so that he could spend days working and then "came downstairs to a supper of sweet cabbage soup". She has a look of "childlike contentment" and "opens like a flower". When Ben finds a lover, she is too lovely and fragile to be a real woman, "perfect, not a blemish or a scar. I pounded myself into her until I hurt us both". These images of human relationship seem pulled up from literary traditions rather than from Michaels' experience.

This book has moral as well as aesthetic ambitions. It is about how people learn to love one another despite their terrible experiences, it is about learning that "there is nothing a man will not do for another" as well as "nothing a man will not do to another".

But, finally, the idealised morality is less memorable than the occasional images where you suddenly feel that Anne Michaels has seen something, has known something that she wants to communicate for herself. Ben opens the curtains in Jakob Beer's house in Greece, "and the simple room turned resplendent; everything startlingly white except for the turquoise cushions on the bed, as if the tide of sunlight had rushed in and left behind fragments of sea".

Anne Michaels has shown us she can write. But she is putting literature on a pedestal; it would be wonderful to see her making it a little less polished, a little dirtier and less splendid.

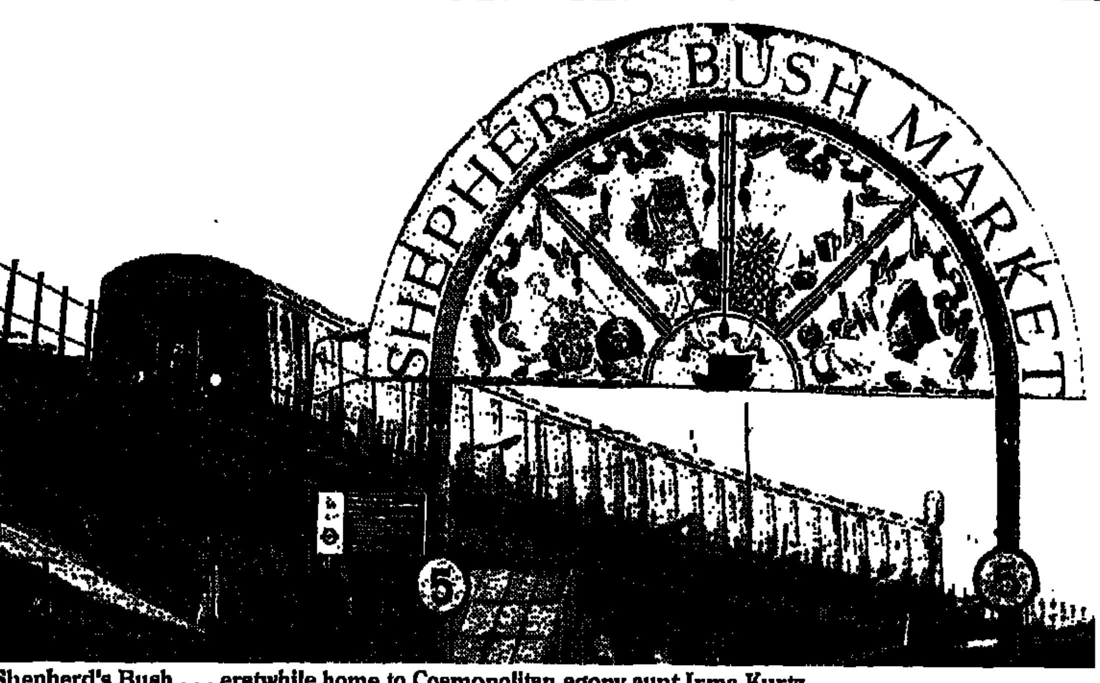
A love letter to London

Nicholas Lezard

Dear London: Notes from the Big City
by Irma Kurtz
Fourth Estate 212pp £14.99

WE THINK it an American fault, the collapse of perspective that makes them say, "oh, are you from London? Well, do you know soandso?" Don't laugh, you've done it too, or felt like it, and anyway, the great thing about cities is the way their inhabitants find their lives criss-crossing; they seize on the landmarks, temporal and geographical, that they have in common. So I liked learning that Kurtz arrived in London in 1963, the same year I did (she arrived on the boat train at Victoria, I in an American woman in Queen Charlotte's Hospital); as I liked learning that she lived, for a relatively long time, in Shepherd's Bush, as I do.

This is an autobiography disguised as a love letter to London, or a love letter to London disguised as an autobiography, I'm not sure which. Now, as you might have noticed, London is being touted as the place to be at the moment, which this Londoner finds embarrassing at best, an invitation to Nemesis at worst (the most likely effect is probably going to be a combination of backlash and overcrowding, like a quietly excellent restaurant suddenly praised). But Kurtz, who seems to have written this book before all this rubbish hit the presses ("to come out and say London is terrific sounds mildly treasonable nowadays"), is wryly amused by London's indifference to praise: "'You mean you actually like it here?' asks the cabbie, way past incredulity, as good as telling the American in the back seat she must be off her trolley."



Shepherd's Bush . . . erstwhile home to Cosmopolitan agony aunt Irma Kurtz

But she is not off her trolley. The more immodest Londoners would agree with her; even Roy Porter concludes his social history of the city with an acknowledgment of its "livability", the way it is good at being a good place to be in. Not that it's perfect. And it is not perfect for a garrulous American Jew, liable "to treat bus queues as potential seminars for consciousness raising", frustrated by our taciturnity: "Who are these people? What sunless place is this that they call Lun-dun? How the hell did I wash up in Lun-dun? I am undone in Lun-dun." Or, as another American who stayed put here put it, "Unreal City, / Under the brown fog of a winter dawn, / A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many, / I had not thought death had undone so many." (London is also, then, a great place for a good moan.)

But then even she respects this respect for silence and privacy: "Londoners have a resistance to famous people, traffic doesn't stop for them . . . Movie stars are often to be seen sitting in West End clubs, alone. Alone. Or even sometimes just standing around the streets, looking puzzled and a little scared." (Think of the embarrassingly scant crowd Madonna attracted recently for Evita, hur hur.) "The main reason Londoners are slow to adulate is that they believe that anyone who is world-famous cannot be all that good at what he does." This sits awkwardly with an anecdote, a dozen pages back, about a swanky restaurant stunned into silence by the appearance of Nureyev and Margot Fonteyn, but we can put this into the category of rule-proving exception.

Anyway, we can take only so much praise (the best theatre in the world? Oh dear), so it comes almost as a relief to have her life story interlarded with the geography. This stuff's good, too. As agony aunt for Cosmopolitan ("it was about time someone paid for what I'd been handing out free all my life"), she has been at the cutting edge of mundanity — where the everyday suddenly turns into the freakish — and so she can't even describe buying the papers in a dull way. Her prose is so well-tuned that never once do you catch yourself asking who this person is, and why on earth is she telling us about her heartaches, her dinner parties from Hell, her gardening. She is, above all, observant; on the sight of Soho drag queens walking home early on Sunday morning: "defrocked and tired, always alone, under the vestiges of make-up and glitter dust, they show the faces of unhappy men, henpecked from within."

Like the best autobiographers, she is not above settling scores, or at least setting the record straight, which can often look like the same thing; sometimes with her friends, such as Rhoda, who one day turned on her with an iron-hard jet of psychobabble, or the horrors with whom she had her final dinner party in Crouch End; sometimes with herself: "Two of my three acquaintances in England at that time were a married couple perpetually on the point of divorce over his infidelities of which, in the strictest sense, I had briefly been one . . ." (I love that "in the strictest sense".)

In short, this is a charming book. I feel that Kurtz will understand that "charming" is no mere pat on the head, the kind of quiet compliment that one of her friends mistook for veiled insult (as in "do come again" being read as "don't come again"). She has not only negotiated the London minefield ("London" here, as it so often is, rightly or wrongly, a synechdoche for the country) successfully, but that she has helped us make ourselves more comfortable in it; and London itself has behaved well enough to her not to make her want to pack her bags and leave.

Dear London is available at a special discount price of £11.99 from Books@The Guardian Weekly

Contenders for children's fiction prize

Joanna Carey, the Guardian children's books editor, sizes up this year's shortlist

Junk, by Melvin Burgess (Andersen, £12.99, 13+)

USING a number of different narrative voices, Burgess tells a complex, harrowing story about young people in the grip of drug addiction, set in a rundown area of Bristol in the early 1980s. Frightening certainly, but haunting, and remarkable for the insight and understanding with which the author develops the characters as each of them follows a subtly different trajectory through the story. One by one Gemma and her companions "talk to camera", intimately and uninhibitedly documenting the disintegration and Hogarthian inevitability of it all.

Love in Cyberia, by Chloe Rayban (Bodley Head, £9.99, 12+)

JUSTINE, a wealthy sophisticated Chelsea girl, thinks that the Internet is just for nerds and losers. But after a misunderstanding with a computer, Justine accidentally uploads herself into cyberspace and crash-lands back in 1967 where she learns the truth about the swinging sixties and meets her own mother (aged 16). A very funny social satire.

The Butterfly Lion, by Michael Morpurgo, Illus Christian Birmingham (HarperCollins, £3.50, 8+)

A GHOST story, a war story, a love story, an animal story, a school story . . . all woven together to create what one of the judges describes as a "seamless narrative that is unashamedly about loyalty, devotion and kept promises . . ., the foundations upon which trust can be built and loneliness can be overcome".

Johnny and the Bomb, by Terry Pratchett (Transworld, £12.99, £3.99 pbk, 10+)

IN THIS genuinely imaginative and inventive time-shift story, Johnny and his gang find themselves back in May 1941, getting a first-hand experience of wartime Britain and a chance to alter the course of history. Full of wisecracks, sociological snapshots and thought-provoking philosophical conundrums.

The Trokeville Way, by Russell Hoban (Cape, £12.99, 12+)

AN UNUSUAL novel with a haunting visionary dimension in which the narrator — now 16 — looks back on the psychological and physical turmoil of his early adolescence. Nick's "mind trip" is set against a home-life thrumming with a bewildering array of cultural references, ranging from Grace Jones and Nightmare On Elm Street, through Iron Maiden and Sepultura, to Bartok and Hindemith.

Creepers, by Keith Gray (Mammoth, £3.99, 11+)

"CREEPING" takes place at night, in unsuspecting residential areas. While decent folk draw the curtains and watch TV, fiercely competitive teenage boys race blindly across the fences of whole rows of back gardens. The longer the street, the greater the glory. In this gripping first novel about friendship, courage and loss, Gray creates a rare tension and throws a new light on the dark side of suburbia.

The Fated Sky, by Henrietta Branford (Hodder, £3.99, 11+)

THIS is an absorbing historical novel, with a Scandinavian/Viking background, whose strong narrative carries the young heroine through stormy times in a hostile world that throws up all kinds of issues of gender, survival, persecution, intolerance and different attitudes to violence. Fiercely imagined; history comes alive without recourse to the device of a "time shift".

The winner of this year's £1,500 Guardian children's fiction prize will be judged later this month

Life down on the farm

Kate Herbert

The Innocence of Roast Chicken
by Jo-Anne Richards
Headline 224pp £16.99

THE TITLE of Jo-Anne Richards's first novel is a natural kooky-name contest contender. But The Innocence Of Roast Chicken makes sense on a farm where children do not connect cherished farmyard pets, albeit chickens, with what is served up on the table. To discover the connection is to realise one of the unpalatable truths about growing up. And these roast chickens provide an analogy for harsher truths in a story of innocence suddenly and brutally lost.

Kate is a bright, young South African woman rendered incapable of sharing her country's hope and optimism by her experiences one Christmas on her grandparents' farm. A cynical and despairing adult, she cannot stomach the naivety of her liberal husband and friends as apartheid looks set to end. Cleverly constructed, Kate's story switches between an account of her own loss of innocence that Christmas holiday and the current breakdown in her relationship with her husband and country.

Richards is best when describing, through the eyes of the seven-year-old Kate, the original Eden that is life on the East Cape farm. The farm comes alive though evocative and personal descriptions with such a close attention to detail it is easy to presume the novel is at least partly autobiographical (which it is not). The sections focusing on the older Kate's destructive relationship with her easy-going husband are interesting and necessary, but you itch to get back to the farm and the build-up to the specific incident that shattered the young child's dreams.

Unlike many South African books of the last two decades, this novel does not appear to be of political intent. It provides a slice in the life of ordinary middle-class whites living in South Africa in the turbulent last days of apartheid. Such politics as it has are drawn along the fine line between hope and despair so central to children in general and South African adults in particular.

The treatment of English liberals is fresh in its frankness; neither martyrs or heroes, Richards's ordinary folk are loyal and optimistic — and naive and self-important. Not many writers would have been in a position to criticise the great liberal cause before 1989-90.

With luck, The Innocence Of Roast Chicken will help pave the way for a new genre of simple and honest South African story-telling.

Full of thoughts for today

Anthony Smith

The Proper Study of Mankind:
An Anthology of Essays
by Isaiah Berlin edited by
Henry Hardy and Robert Hausheer
Chatto & Windus 667pp £25

I REMEMBER (I think I can remember) an afternoon in the seventies when Isaiah Berlin began a lecture by pouring before his audience a luxurious libation of potential topics: "Shall we talk about Schlegel or Herzen or Tolstoy or Schelling or Hegel? Let's talk about Vico or Hamann or Sorel or de Maistre? Or perhaps we should talk about Herder?" These were writers largely unknown to most of his audience, but the rapid-fire delivery of their names, in Berlin's unique vocalisation, fluctuating between boom and lisp, rendered them instantly recognisable: samples of that vast list of neglected figures whose disparate visions of the world — each conveying a complete and comprehensive view of life — Berlin summoned up to help in the construction of his own pluralistic vision.

Many of these writers make an appearance in this collection of Berlin's classic essays — for this volume provides us with the essential Berlin. The reader is here given a ringside seat in the arena in which these exclusive moral systems — which Berlin brings sharply alive and delights in displaying each at its most cogent — clash irreconcilably in unbridgeable confrontation.

Some of them have played a part in the devising of the century's calamitous tyrannies, but they are not revived by Berlin in order merely to be summarily refuted and dismissed: they are there partly because they provide the raw material of the moral pluralism that is the heart of the whole Berlin project. At their most intellectually compelling their mutual conflict demonstrates the incommensurability and incompatibility of different ideas of the good. In giving them mental houseroom, we the readers are being obliged to accept powerful and fascinating but incongruent ideas into each of which Berlin has performed a feat of self-transposition. The Berlin project is not simply a dazzling exercise in European eclecticism expressed with the clarity of traditional English thought, but an insight into the impossibility of creating a unified view of the goals of life.



Berlin: pluralistic vision

One of the most frequently implied convictions in Berlin's *oeuvre* is that the world furnishes us with incompatible goals and withholds any single scale of value by which to measure the goodness or the validity of ideas. Freedom and equality for example, are two conflicting goals, and we simply cannot have either in its purest or most complete form without sacrificing the prospect of the other. If you really want to make certain that people behave well towards one another you will end up by pushing them around. To the extent that one forces oneself or others to observe a moral precept one reduces personal freedom. More troublingly, he suggests that it is impossible to choose a single set of values and live by them without running into contradictions, and that it is impossible to select and combine a few desirable goals without walking straight into vast, radically inconsistent propositions. The pleasure in reading Berlin lies in the clarity of the argument, in the laying out of his monumental sentences and paragraphs, each of which is complete in itself while part of the greater and seemingly irrefutable whole which is gradually and massively revealed.

The Proper Study Of Mankind contains the essay "Two Concepts of Liberty" and the famous piece on Tolstoy's view of history entitled "The Hedgehog and the Fox" (the latter knows many things but the former one big thing), but it also gives us his conversations with Akhmatova and Pasternak, his memorable assessments of Winston Churchill and Roosevelt, and many other treasurable articles and lectures. The great Berlin themes can all be found here: his emphatic questioning of the post-Enlightenment scientific autarchy that suggests to us that the universe is a single harmonious unity illustratable in a coherent body of all-answering ideas; his insistence that there exists an illimitable number of "forms of life" of human cultures, in which people realise themselves, through language, traditions, expressions of moral ideas, and which can lead people on to nationalisms, aggressive or otherwise. There is his opting for "negative" liberty based upon the maximum possible freedom from outside interference and thus a sceptical rejection of the "positive" liberty practised by 20th century totalitarians; his repeated warning of the unavailability of rational solutions to moral questions, political ones especially, where the individual is left to face agonising choices among equally compelling possibilities. Drawn together, these doctrines constitute a restatement of liberalism in a form by which the world could live.

In the piece entitled "The Apotheosis of the Romantic Will" Berlin shows how the German Romantics set their mark upon their age (and ours), by planting the belief that an undisciplined enthusiasm, nurtured by martyrdom and sustained by its own scorn for worldly success, justifies indulging the untrammelled human will over such ideals as harmonious life: rationalist self-righteousness versus the reasoned acceptance of contradictions. In a few pages it lays bare the intellectual and psychological origins of modern fanaticisms. The supreme value of Berlin's writings lies in this everyday practicality, the way in which every laden page points to simple transportable mind-clarifying verities, which are derived from the knowledge that the world consists of feelings, rivalries, sufferings.

We are inured to thinking or behaving — in daily life if not in considered theory — as if all good things were automatically self-consistent, and that, therefore as he puts it, "freedom, order, knowledge, happiness, a closed future must be at least compatible and perhaps even entail one another in a systematic fashion". The contemporary post-imperial world provides us daily with the spectacle of clashing cultural systems, which we observe with mystified hand-wringing. Isaiah Berlin's classic work, though it points away from easy answers, suggests that in "value pluralism" there is an intellectual path towards a tolerant maturity, not an easy path but one fraught with difficult choices and renunciations, with which the moral vacuum of the age might be filled.

Building for pleasure

Jan Morris

Clough Williams-Ellis:
The Architect of Portmeirion
by Jonah Jones
Seren 204pp £9.95

HAPPINESS, private and public, was a preoccupation of the architect Clough Williams-Ellis — by all appearances not a very usual one in his profession. He believed that happiness had to be learned, he died believing that he had learned it, and he spent his career trying to infuse it into buildings and landscapes. Whatever else you may think about his archetypal work, the hotel-folly of Portmeirion in north Wales, there is no denying that it is fun.

It is hard to suppose that Sir Richard Rogers or Sir Norman Foster write happiness into their specifications, and of course architectural purists were always to accuse Clough (as he was universally known until his death in 1978) of frivolity and superficiality. He was certainly not above sham and jokiness — two-dimensional casts, artificially induced damp-stains, a whimsical tendency to gild the lily. It is the purpose of this shrewd, affectionate and beguiling book, though, by his distinguished sculptural collaborator Jonah Jones, to demonstrate that Williams-Ellis was no mere hedonist, but an artist of integrity, and a citizen of serious purpose.

One of his troubles was that he was born lucky. Except for the loss of his only son in the second world war, and the burning down of his house soon afterwards, things nearly always went well for Clough — he inherited money and property, he was happily married, he was terrific fun, he made friends easily, attracted fashionable clients and had an easy talent for exploiting festive styles of the past. All this made strangers suppose that he could not really be a dedicated artist, or be possessed of a real civic conscience. He looked and behaved like a gifted dilettante.

As for the artist, Jones does not really try to persuade us that Clough was in the first rank of architects: as Clough himself said, his work would never be in the architectural histories. It was mostly pastiche of one sort or another, often on a grand scale — essays in the Cotswold vernacular, Georgian reconstructions, country houses *à la* Lutyens and the merry theatrical *mélange* of Portmeirion. Jones half-heartedly maintains that Clough was not altogether averse to 1930s modernism, giving us a photograph of a fairly wishy-washy restaurant in Surrey to prove it, and referring us to a perfectly ghastly café at Criccieth. The truth is, nevertheless, that what makes a Williams-Ellis building unmistakeable, however derivative, is the element of happiness that he somehow seemed able to mix with his mortar.

And since he believed in a public right to happiness, too, he was one of the earliest campaigners for the protection of the environment. All his life he was hard at it.

They knighted old Clough in the end, but he never did join the architectural establishment. More or less self-trained, he remained his own man to the end, conceiving his own delights, committing his own solecisms.

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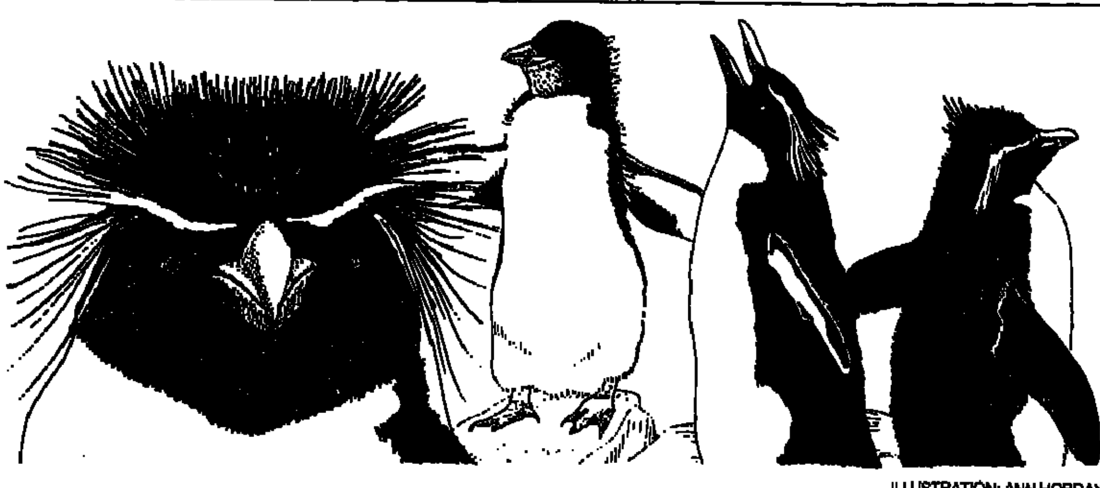


ILLUSTRATION: ANN HOBDAY

Pick up a penguin

Mark Cocker

IT IS ONE of the insidious aspects of endless wildlife television that when you're finally confronted by the genuine creature in its living environment you often have a deflationary feeling of *déjà vu*. However, in the case of the penguins I saw recently the situation was even worse.

Watching them in the Falklands, where their colonies form one of the archipelago's outstanding wildlife spectacles, I found it difficult to stem a flow of images featuring penguins in motor cars, or waddling through urban settings accompanied by advertisement jingles. You realise that with their abundant anthropic qualities — upright stance, bipedal movement, arm-like flippers and quizzical, nose-in-the-air looks — they have been endlessly exploited for televisual comedy.

Yet it would be wrong to blame it all on television. Penguins do seem to possess a genuine penchant for humour. In fact, researchers have now made that official. Psychiatric tests have shown that penguins in wildlife parks are good for their audience's mental health. Their Chaplinesque waddle is the most obvious comic feature, but in the wild they have a much wider repertoire.

A group of gentoo penguins, for instance, gave us a perfect demonstration. Just returned from a fishing excursion, these birds, the third largest amongst the world's 18 species, suddenly tumbled on to a beach from a sparkling Atlantic breaker and hurried away in alarm. As we advanced towards them, so panic took hold and when their legs couldn't keep pace with the urge for speed, the birds flopped on to their bellies and, with legs and flippers working in a frenzy, swam across the sand in a perfect crawl.

Gentoos are funny, but the true Falkland clowns are the rockhoppers. Extremely dumpy, with crown feathers that stick upwards in spiky tufts, they are the smallest and probably the commonest of the Falklands' five species.

AS THEIR name indicates, they nest on rocky ledges and cliff tops, sometimes considerable distances from the sea. To reach such sites they must jump and waddle all the way. A rotund, clumsy creature with a punk's haircut, jumping up and down with flippers wafting to keep balance is not the kind of sight to overwhelm you with a sense of awe.

To keep the humour in check, it was useful to recall that penguin species breeding at the South Pole can withstand temperatures of -70C and winds of 200km an hour, that they can dive to depths of 250m and remain submerged for 18 minutes.

Then we were offered an experience which made these sobering statistics unnecessary. Rockhoppers at one colony were hampered in landing by breakers sweeping up the rock face in a surge of foam. The penguins would try to ride the wave so that they could clamber ashore just as it broke. But occasionally things went wrong, they were towed helplessly under and consumed by the next incoming surge. Long afterwards no penguin seemed to appear in the boiling spume, and we began to imagine it crushed on the rocks. Then up it would pop, as buoyant and imperishable as a piece of plastic flotsam.

It was the kind of experience that enabled me to envisage penguins when they leave in winter for the medium in which they really excel. Beneath the waves these beautiful birds can literally fly at speeds of 40km an hour. I try to think of them now, not as an appendage to a silly television commercial, but out in the Drake Passage, the 1,000km of terrifying ocean between Antarctica and Tierra del Fuego, where the waves can tower to 40m and where a penguin might genuinely feel at ease.

Chess Leonard Barden

LINARES, the annual élite tournament held in the Andalusian town, has a reputation for dramatic results and controversy, some triggered by the short-fused local sponsor Luis Rentero. Linares 1994 featured Karpov's impressive victory, which was preceded by the incident where a TV camera caught Kasparov taking a move back against Judit Polgar. When Polgar's older sister, Zsuzsa, won the world women's crown at Linares 1996, the players nearly walked out after Rentero tried to fine them for too many draws.

Linares 1997, which took place last month, was in the same thespian tradition. It was one of the strongest-ever 12-player tournaments: category 19 with an average of 2,701 rating points, and missing only Karpov, who was campaigning for a seat in the Russian parliament, and Kamsky, recently retired, from the world's top grandmasters.

Judit Polgar set a new landmark for women in chess when she took a clear lead in the fifth round, half a point ahead of Kasparov, who had claimed beforehand that the only interesting opponents left for him were Karpov and IBM's Deep Blue computer.

Kasparov then launched a series of fine wins to take first prize, with Kramnik second and Britain's Adams third. Linares was a career-best result both for Adams and for Polgar, who finished fifth.

Ivanchuk v Polgar

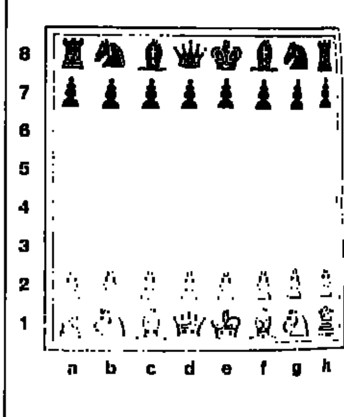
1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nf3 Bg7 4 g3 0-0 5 Bg2 d5 6 0-0 Nc6 Provocative play, which White could counter with the quiet 7 Nbd2. **7 Nc3 dxc4 8 d5 Nb4 9 e4 e6 10 Bg5 h6 11 Be3 Nd3** Not exd5? 12 Bc5, but now Black stands well. Few King's Indian players have sunk a knight deep into their opponent's position so early.

12 dxe6 Bxe6 13 h3 Qd7 14 Qd2 Bxh3 15 Bxh6 Rae8 16 Bxg7 Kxg7 17 Ng5 Bxg2 18 Kxg2 Nh5! 19 Qe3? Ivanchuk, whose eccentric opening left Black a good pawn up, misses the main threat. **Ndf4+! 20 Resigns** If 20 gxf4 Qg4+ 21 Kh2 Nxf4 22 Rg1 Rh8+ wins.

The loser of such a game normally grieves alone, but Ivanchuk, who had won first prize in three previous Linares, later explained his feelings: "I am like a wounded lion here, everyone is hunting me; this, and a 19-move loss with White, have never happened to me before. I am sick of chess; I can't concentrate, and will give up for at least a year. The game with Polgar was terrible. I know it will be published all over the world, but the reader will never know how I was feeling. After the game, I could not sleep all night. Polgar is a great talent, but I was not myself for that game."

The centrepiece of the Lancashire CA's centenary year will be a Nigel Short v Michael Adams match at Heywood Civic Centre on May 22-30. This will be Short's first appearance in his home county since the bitterness sparked by his late decision to switch his 1993 world title match with Kasparov from Manchester to London.

No 2462



This is the start of a game whose moves were 1 ? ? 2 ? ? 3 ? ? 4 ? ? 5 ? ? 6 0-0-0 mate. Can you fill in the blanks?

No 2461: 1 Rb7. If hxg2 2 Rh7 g1Q+ 3 Qxg1. If fxg2 2 Qa8 g1Q+ 3 Rb1.

Quick crossword no. 356

Across

5 Brotherly (9)
8 Document — studied by racing enthusiasts (4)
9 Amphibious egg-laying mammal (8)
10 Put on — without being told? (6)
11 Occur (6)
13 Run — a profession (6)
15 Go over (anag) — a rut (6)
16 Ecstatic (8)
18 Simple (4)
19 Thwart (9)

Down

1 Whisky-based liqueur (8)
2 Main — way to fasten paper sheets together (6)
3 Garland (6)
4 Cautious (4)
6 Famous artist — in copper? (9)
7 Oversee (9)
12 Belongings (8)
14 Say no to — waste (6)
15 In abundance (6)
17 Certain (4)

Last week's solution

Bridge Zia Mahmood

CAN YOU remember the shower scene from Psycho? And can you imagine a level of fear that would reduce its stark savagery to that of a bubble bath? Can you conceive of a terror that would make any Nightmare On Elm Street seem like a pleasant daydream? You would, if you ever played in the big game at TGR's — London's high-stakes bridge club — and cut the Bridge Partner From Hell.

To the casual observer, H — as we will call him — looks a harmless soul. The regular players know better. I've seen world champions tremble as they reached to cut a card, praying for a deuce if they see that H has drawn his customary ace of spades. I have seen the bravest men turn deathly pale as they realise that there is no escape from sitting opposite H for the next four deals of a Chicago.

H is the most dangerous of partners because he is an inventive spirit who thrives on danger. He creates bids to bewilder his unwary partner — and if they end up by confusing the opponents also, that is merely a bonus. Most of his experiments end in disaster, of course, but H's beam of joy when a coup works is counter-balanced only by his partner's rictus of horror as he realises what might happen on the next hand. Perhaps in years to come H will be heralded as a genius, for he has already taken pre-emptive bidding to a new dimension. The world is not yet ready for H's three-club opening on a singleton.

A couple of Saturdays ago, H cut a strong player by the name of — well, let us simply call him S. Now, S is a Special Branch officer with considerable experience of international terrorism, so if anyone could remain calm in the teeth of H's machinations, surely it was S. The spectators held their breath as S picked up these cards:

♠Q ♥J 10 6 3 ♦A K 10 9 7 ♣A J 5

S opened with one diamond as North, and East overcalled one spade. H promptly bid four spades! S did not move, but his knuckles whitened as he considered the implications of this. A double of one spade would be negative, a bid of two spades would be a cue bid in support of diamonds, while three spades would be a splinter bid showing shortage and an excellent diamond fit. Since there would be no alternative to four spades if H actually held a massive spade suit, while there were plenty of bids available if H held diamond support, S eventually decided that, for once, H was bidding sensibly. He passed, and this was the full deal:

North
♠ Q
♥ J 10 6 3
♦ A K 10 9 7
♣ A J 5

West
♠ K J 8 6 5 2
♥ K 9 7 5 2
♦ None
♣ 4 3

East
♠ A 10 9 7 6 4
♥ Q 4
♦ 8 6 5
♣ Q 2

South
♠ None
♥ A 8
♦ Q J 4 3 2
♣ K 10 9 8 7 6

Of course, H had decided to invent a "super-splinter" of four spades rather than the normal three spades, but as usual, this was completely unreadable by his partner. Four spades went seven down, with seven diamonds unbeatable. Next time you go to a horror film and hear your neighbour laughing at the most gruesome scenes, don't worry. He's probably just come from a game with H. ©

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Cricket One-day international

New Zealand tie series as England surrender

Paul Weaver in Wellington

ENGLAND'S last match of a long and sometimes frustrating winter was not so much a last hurrah as a last hiccup. Their defeat by New Zealand in the fifth one-day international, which enabled their hosts to level the series at 2-2 with one tie, was a very ungrand finale.

This defeat was hardly surprising. In cricket, as in any sport, it is difficult to regain the initiative once lost, and England, perhaps distracted by thoughts of home, had surrendered their supremacy in the previous match in Auckland.

It is disappointing to end a largely successful tour of New Zealand with successive defeats. England's limp performances were reminiscent of their 3-0 defeat by Zimbabwe. In this case, however, they have played enough good cricket in the past seven weeks to be forgiven.

If these defeats also help lead to a complete overhaul of England's sniffy attitude to one-day cricket, so much the better. England must find younger players with more all-round ability if they are to have any chance in the 1999 World Cup.

But England also need to reappraise their dated tactics as well as the threadbare homily, repeated this winter and last, that priority has been given to the winning of Test matches. The purist will tell you that Test matches are the real thing, but the purist is also in the minority through the turnstiles of world cricket.

When New Zealand won the toss and batted on Tuesday they appeared to have under-achieved by 20-30 runs. Once again Astle proved to be their premier one-day batsman, scoring his third half-century of the series, going on to score 94 from 129 deliveries.

New Zealand's disappointing total of 228 was to prove more than enough. England's batsmen were once again becalmed, and only the last pair of Gough and Caddick were capable of forcing the pace against a disciplined attack that bowled them out for 200. Graham Thorpe scored 55, but his runs came from 83 deliveries with just two fours.

It was Jack Russell's first international appearance on this tour of New Zealand. One willed this great competitor to win the thing. But England's batting was flat and uninventive throughout.

Football Premiership Aston Villa 1 Liverpool 0

Blow to Liverpool's title hopes

David Lacey

LIVERPOOL'S pursuit of Manchester United at the top of the table hit a sticky patch at Villa Park on Sunday. Just when a mud pie of a pitch was threatening to produce a stalemate, Ian Taylor won the game for Aston Villa with a goal seven minutes from the end.

Liverpool's second league defeat in a dozen matches, and their fifth of the season in the Premiership, keeps them four points behind United as the contest approaches a critical stage. There was a period in the second half on Sunday when Roy Evans's team moved up a gear and looked capable of reducing the gap to a single point, but with even Robbie Fowler's finishing unusually awry they were unable to exploit their ascendancy.

Villa, whose season was starting to drift, have now won three times in four games and are again pushing for a place in Europe. This victory will have given them added satisfaction after losing four successive encounters to Liverpool in league and cup with 11 goals conceded and none scored.

On Sunday, a match which promised much in the opening quarter-hour spent the rest of the first half palpably failing to deliver. This was partly down to a surface which hampered accurate passing and broke up the flow of the game. Yet both defences were solid almost throughout.

It was a mistake by McManaman that led to Taylor's winner in the 83rd minute. He allowed Alan Wright to gain possession on the left and after two defenders had lunged in with Yorke to meet Townsend's cross, the ball again ended up with Taylor, who this time did not miss.

Fowler ended the match lying on the ground holding his face, a posture which summed up Liverpool's afternoon.

Football results

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP Aston Villa 1 Liverpool 0; Blackburn 1 Sunderland 0; Coventry 1 Wimbledon 1; Derby Co 3 Chelsea 2; Everton 0 Arsenal 2; Leeds 1 West Ham 0; Man Utd 3 Coventry 1; Newcastle 0 Southmptn 1; Sheff Wed 3 Middlesbro 1; Tottenham 0 Nottm For 1; Wimbledon 1 Leicester 3. **Leading positions:** 1, Man Utd (played 28-points 57); 2, Liverpool (28-53); 3, Arsenal (29-51).

NATIONWIDE LEAGUE First Division Bradford 1 Man City 3; Bolton 1 West Brom 0; Grimsby 1 Birminghm 2; Norwich 2 Huddersfld 0; Oxford 1 Crystal Pal 4; Portsmth 1 Sheff Utd 1; Port Vale 1 Reading 0; QPR 0 Oldham 1; Southend 1 Barnsley 2; Swindon 1 Charlton 0; Wolves 0 Ipswich 0. **Leading positions:** 1, Bolton (35-71); 2, Wolves (34-59); 3, Barnsley (33-58).

Second Division Bournemth 0 Shrewsbry 0; Bristol R 0 Walsall 1; Millwall 2 Wycombe 1; Peterboro 1 Chesterfld 1; Plymouth 0 Blackpool 1; Preston 3 Bury 1; Stockport 0 Rotherham 0; York 1 Luton 1. **Leading positions:** 1, Brentford (32-60); 2, Luton (31-58); 3, Millwall (34-54).

Third Division Carlisle 1 Lincoln 0; Darlington 2 Brighton 0; Fulham 1 Chester 1; Hartlepool 0 Scunthorpe 1; Hereford 1 Exeter 2; Hull 1 Northmptn 1; Leyton Orient 0 Barnet 1; Mansfield 1 Cambridge 0; Rochdale 2 Torquay 1; Swansea 0 Cardiff 1. **Leading positions:** 1, Carlisle (34-69); 2, Wigan (34-66); 3, Fulham (35-65).

BELL'S SCOTTISH LEAGUE Premier Division Aberdeen 2 Rangers 2; Celtic 2 Hearts 0; Hibernian 1 Motherwell 1. **Leading positions:** 1, Rangers (28-68); 2, Celtic (28-63); 3, Dundee Utd (28-49).

Second Division Ayr 2 Berwick 0; Clyde P Queen Sth P; Dumbarton 1 Brechin 2; Livingston P Hamilton P; Stenhousemuir P Stranraer P. **Leading positions:** 1, Ayr (27-61); 2, Livingston (26-60); 3, Hamilton (24-47).

Third Division Arbroath P E.Stirling P; Montrose P Ross County P; Queens Pk 4 Forfar 0; Inverness 3 Alloa 1. **Leading positions:** 1, Inverness (26-57); 2, Forfar (27-44); 3, Ross County (25-43).

Golf Desert Classic

Green blooms in the desert

David Davies in Dubai

COMPLETELY careless of reputation, Richard Green, a 26-year-old Australian, beat the current and former world number ones, respectively Greg Norman and Ian Woosnam, in a sudden-death play-off to win the Desert Classic here on Sunday.

Having holed a 20-foot putt on the 72nd green to go into the extra holes, he then holed from a similar distance on the 17th for a winning birdie. Little wonder that in the moment of victory he confessed himself "lost for words".

Later he found a few. "To win against those guys is unbelievable. When we set off for the play-off I could feel my heart pumping hard against my chest. To play well with all that going on is pretty special."

But if Green was overjoyed, Woosnam was one fed-up Welshman. If ever anyone had a tournament won and proceeded to lose it in the wettest fashion possible, he was that man.

He arrived at the long 18th needing a par to win outright. The only challenge the hole offers is to those who want to be over the greenside lake in two, and Woosnam wanted no such thing. He duly laid up short of the water and was left with a shot of 73 yards to the pin, the simplest of wedge shots for a man who, in 20 years as a professional, has won the US Masters and over £5 million in prize-money.

But what happened next will give hope to every duffer: he hit his 73-yard wedge shot no more than 60 yards, it pitched on the bank of the lake and ran, inexorably, back into it. The shock affected him so profoundly that his mind stopped functioning and, instead of walking round the lake and playing a little chip-and-run shot, he played again from where he was. That he got the second attempt to 12 feet, and holed it to get into a play-off, is commendable, but it should have been unnecessary.

That simple mistake cost Woosnam £55,865, the difference between winning and sharing second place with Norman.

There was no fairytale finish to the comeback of José Maria Olazábal. Despite Saturday's superb 65 he was too far back, but his final 71 was his third under-par round of the tournament. He said he felt no after-effects.



Green . . . extra-hole winner

Sports Diary Shiv Sharma

Chelsea's cup joy

A CONTROVERSIAL penalty three minutes from the end of extra time put Chelsea into the FA Cup quarter-finals at Stamford Bridge last week. An absorbing fifth-round replay against Leicester City looked to be heading for a shootout when Erland Johnsen fell under pressure in the Leicester penalty area. The referee awarded a penalty and Frank Leboeuf successfully converted, sending the goalkeeper, Kasey Keller, diving the wrong way. Chelsea's opponents in the next round will be Portsmouth.

Another side to score a late winner in the fifth round were Derby. Dean Sturridge poached a goal two minutes from time to complete his side's dramatic comeback against Coventry. Derby found themselves 2-0 down after 13 minutes but bounced back with goals from Ashley Ward and Robin Van der Laan. Derby will meet Middlesbrough in their quarter-final.

What started as the biggest night in the history of Stockport County ended in heartbreak after the Second Division side saw their Coca-Cola Cup dreams fade. Stockport had defeated three Premiership sides on the way and spent £12,000 on returfing part of the pitch for the occasion. The first leg of the semi-final against Middlesbrough seemed to be heading for a draw when Bryan Robson's team struck twice in the final 18 minutes, with goals from Mikkel Beck and Fabrizio Ravanelli. The victory gives Middlesbrough, from the Premiership, a substantial advantage to take into the second encounter at the Riverside on March 12.

BLACKBURN ROVERS' long search for a new manager is over at last. Roy Hodgson, the former Swiss national coach and currently at Internazionale, is to take over at Ewood Park in July. Sampdoria's manager Sven Eriksson had accepted the job but changed his mind late last month. Hodgson has been under pressure at Inter after a run of bad results. He was one of the first coaches that Rovers contacted after Ray Harford left last October.

Meanwhile Steve Coppell agreed to return to management with Crystal Palace, three months after quitting Manchester City on grounds that he could not handle the pressure. Coppell said: "The City situation is in the past. Pressure is not an issue at Palace, and all I want to think about is football."

Coppell is taking over at Palace from Dave Bassett, who moves to Nottingham Forest as general manager. Bassett will forge a new-look management team with Stuart Pearce.

IT IS not only the top Italian soccer players who are on their way to Britain in increasing numbers — their clubs have also taken a shine to it. AC Milan are planning a huge £500 million stock market flotation in London next year and have contracted a firm of Dutch-owned stockbrokers to advise them.

A spokesman for the stockbrokers said that the club would be modelling themselves on Manchester United in City terms. Milan, owned by the Italian media magnate and former prime minister, Silvio Berlusconi, are the second club to seek flotation in London. Juventus have already applied for a listing. Newcastle United meanwhile will be worth between £172 million and £193 million when they join the stock market at the beginning of April.



WILLIE CARSON (above), one of the all-time greats of British horse racing and five times champion jockey, has announced his retirement from the saddle at the age of 54. Carson, OBE, started his racing career as a stable boy for half a crown a week and went on to ride a staggering 3,828 winners, including 14 British Classics.

SKY TV, which has been snapping up rights to major sporting events since it started six years ago, suffered its first big setback when the BBC won the battle to broadcast Five Nations Championship matches in Wales, Scotland and Ireland for the next three years. It means that England's away matches against the Celts will go out on terrestrial television. The deal with the BBC is believed to be worth £40 million and includes 14 other internationals during the period.

THE campaign to introduce TV cameras to aid refereeing decisions at soccer matches proved a real turn-off with Fifa, world football's governing body. At the annual conference of its law-making International Board in Belfast, even a proposal for an experiment by French television was thrown out. "We are anxious that television doesn't take over the game by controlling the referee," said a spokesman. "Football is composed of human beings, human frailties and mistakes. We have to live with that".

BOXER Sugar Ray Leonard lost his latest comeback gamble when he was stopped by Puerto Rican Hector "Macho" Camacho in the fifth round of their bout in Atlantic City. The middleweight fighter who captivated the world with his athleticism and bravery, turns 41 next week. He had already retired on at least five occasions, and said after the fight: "My career is definitely over." This time it should be.

FRENCH skiing star Luc Alphand clinched his third consecutive World Cup downhill title at Kvitfjell, Norway.